DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 076 999 CS 200 464

AUTHOR	Hogan, Robert F., Ed.
TITLE	The English Language in the School Program.
INSTITUTION	National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill.
PUB DATE	66
NOTE	271p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Ill. 61801 (Stock No. 25109, $2.75 non-member, $2.50 member)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$9.87
DESCRIPTORS	American English; Composition (Literary); Curriculum Development; Dictionaries; *Elementary Education; *English Curriculum; *English Instruction; Language Instruction; Language Programs; *Language Research; Language Usage; Linguistics; Linguistic Theory; *Secondary Education; Standard Spoken Usage; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

The 22 papers in this publication, drawn from the 1963 and 1964 NCTE Spring Institutes on Language, Linguistics, and School Programs, concentrate on the relevance of recent scholarship for English language programs in elementary and secondary schools. Language theory is the focus of articles by Harold B. Allen, Sumner Ives, Albert H. Marckwardt, W. Nelson Francis, Priscilla Tyler, William R. Slager, and Noam Chomsky. Papers concerned with language usage are by David W. Reed, Jean Malmstrom, Karl W. Dykema, Robert C. Pooley, Hans Kurath, Philip B. Gove, and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. Articles concentrating on the language curriculum are by Robert L. Allen, Dudley Bailey, Ruth G. Strickland, Albert H. Marckwardt, Harold B. Allen, and Francis Christensen. A bibliography on generative-transformational grammar, by Don L. F. Nilsen, is included. (This document previously announced as ED 037 428.) (JM)

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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Edited by Robert F. Hogan

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INTRODUCTION

In professional journals and conferences, in faculty lounges and PTA meetings, a topic widely discussed for more than a decade is whether or not linguistic scholarship has anything significant and useful to say to the teacher of English. To dramatize the issues or to capture attention, we have at times polarized discussion into debates about such questions as these: "What can linguistics do that grammar can't?" or "Which is better—grammar or linguistics?" or "Should we throw out grammar and substitute a program in linguistics?" Insofar as these questions have drawn our attention to recent scholarship in language and its relevance for the English curriculum, they have served a useful purpose.

At times, however, we forgot that this was the strategy. We mistook these for valid questions, and we thought the goal of the debate was to "answer" them. It was then that we confused issues and muddied the dialogue. To the extent that grammar represents an effort to describe accurately the structures of a language and to record its varieties, it is part of linguistics. In the measure that a linguist is concerned with the spoken and written forms of words and with their syntactical relationships in sentences, he is a grammarian. "Which is better—grammar or linguistics?" may seem a more interesting question than "Which is better—carrots or vegetables?" But it is not any more valid.

Long before we began debating such questions, concepts drawn from linguistic scholarship were already embedded in the language curriculum: levels of usage; regional, social, and functional varieties of English; structural patterns of the English sentence; essential differences between speech and writing. Conservative teachers who like to believe that there is some choice left in the matter have to ignore the fact that virtually every serious publisher of English language textbooks has retained in at least a continuing consultant role a linguist to help shape new programs and to revise existing series. But the times are just as troubling for the eager zealot, who searches in vain for a system that is at once total and teachable. Change in language is continual and makes obsolete once valid descriptions or prescriptions. New "grammars" emerge which, while not contradictory, start from different assumptions about what a "grammar" should do, or attack language from a different starting point. Only the charlatan claims that his system provides a comprehensive, "leak-proof" description of contemporary English.

Against such a background the National Council of Teachers of English in 1963 and 1964 sponsored a program of Spring Institutes on Language, Linguistics, and School Programs. The purpose of the program was not to advance the cause of a particular "grammar" since none by itself can do all that English teachers hope to do in language teaching. Rather, the institutes provided an opportunity for teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, trainers of teachers, and others interested in English curriculum to hear distinguished scholars from a variety of fields of language study and to discuss with them the relevance of recent scholarship for English language programs in elementary and secondary schools and for the preparation of teachers.

Two problems attend the publication of the papers from the institutes. What may seem an unevenness in style stems from the fact that some papers were written primarily for publication, with the authors reading their papers at the institute. Others, who extemporized from notes, supplied what are virtually transcripts of remarks prepared as speeches. No concerted effort has been made to render the papers into a uniform style. To do so would imperil the focus and the emphasis that each speaker intended. Worse, it would obliterate the variety that gave strength to the institute program.

A more serious issue is contemporaneity. The papers that follow were drawn largely from the 1964 institutes. In a few instances, papers given in the 1963 program and published by NCTE earlier in *Language, Linguistics, and School Programs* have been reprinted here, either because the speaker or the topic did not appear in the second institute series, or the approach was unique. In both cases, language scholarship has changed so rapidly during the intervening time that any one of the speakers would add to or amend his remarks in the light of these changes if asked to speak to the same point now.

Yet with NCTE's assurance of the merit in the papers as they stand, of the need to avoid further delay in publication, and of a more than corresponding lag between school language programs and what was known even in 1963 and 1964, the authors have consented to the publishing of the papers in their present form.

In recognition of these new developments, this publication goes beyond the 1963-64 institute series for one additional paper and a special bibliography. Generative grammar, understood a few years ago only by those engaged in this frontier of scholarship, has suddenly moved into the curriculum for teachers in training and into English programs for elementary and secondary schools. The paper by Noam Chomsky (see p. 73), which also appears in *College English* for May 1966, and the bibliography prepared especially for this publication by Don L. F. Nilsen will introduce the reader to concepts and issues which were not widely understood at the time of the institute program. Together, these papers are collected and published as an enlargement and a replacement for the older *Language, Linguistics, and School Programs,* now out of print.

Any program of five institutes is a complicated affair. For their success thanks go not only to the speakers whose manuscripts appear here, but to the codirectors: Bernard J. Weiss (Assistant Director for Language Arts, Detroit Public Schools) and Mrs. Marion Steet (English Specialist, Philadelphia Public Schools). Dr. Weiss first collected the papers which are published here and earlier edited the proceedings of the 1963 institutes. NCTE is grateful as well to the local directors of the institutes: Dr. Thomas Devine, Boston University; Mrs. Ruth Herin, Broad Ripple High School, Indianapolis, Indiana; Mr. John Murphy, Oklahoma City University; Mr. Jack Owens, Des Moines Public Schools; and Dr. Silvy Kraus, University of Oregon. If institutes are complicated, so are publications. Mrs. Mary Vander Hart, NCTE Editorial Assistant, brought such care and commitment to this project that the editor's life was easy indeed.

ROBERT F. HOGAN
National Council of Teachers of English

Our English language may be visualized as a ship, sailing, carrying all its speakers along. But they are a restless lot: as the ship sails they stop at various ports, pick up new cargo and new passengers, throw some overboard. They are always fussing with the boat, constantly rebuilding it piecemeal, changing over from oars to sails, then converting to steam; substituting metal for mood here and there, and enlarging it with outriggers or wireless or a power steered rudder. Meantime, the striking thing is that, though they never succeed in plugging all the leaks, it stays afloat. In the end it is a fascinating object, some parts of which though very old are still working as they always have; others, though old, changed over for new uses and their former function forgotten. New parts have been patched in more or less effectively down the years, though some appear redundant. From time to time someone who considered himself a naval engineer or architect has tried to bring some artistic order into the whole, but his efforts have had little overall effect because he could never get the ship into drydock. And while he was working away on the poop, others were botching at the scuppers. This strange vessel contains many things, often inconsistent; it has touched at many strange and splendid ports; yet it is still seaworthy, fit for a voyage into space if necessary.

This is an excerpt from "Some Thoughts on Language and Language Processes," by Frederic G. Cassidy, in *Language, Linguistics, and School Programs*, ed. Bernard J. Weiss (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), pp. 13, 14.

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[*] These five articles were originally published in *Language, Linguistics and School Programs*, ed. Bernard J. Weiss (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), now out of print.

A PHAROS FOR THE INSTITUTE*

HAROLD B. ALLEN
University of Minnesota

July 26, 1963, thirty members of the tour group of the National Council of Teachers of English, after a month of travel to three corners of England, arrived at the fourth, the historic port of Dover. There, just below the medieval castle on the headland, we visited the oldest extant structure in Britain, a lighthouse, a pharos, erected by the Romans two thousand years ago. To the Roman sailors and soldiers and settlers coming to England from across the channel or even from the long Mediterranean voyage it provided a beacon and a guide when the darkness of night fell and the channel fog closed in.

But as we looked at it we realized that this was no ordinary lighthouse of the ancient world. This pharos was eight-sided; it provided not only a guide to safe harbor but also orientation to the eight points of the compass. For one side was at a right angle to due north, another to northeast, another to east, and so on. When the night was cloudy and the sun was blanked by fog, all the Roman had to do was to feel the pharos wall; he had a sure direction finder.

Our admiration for this ingenuity, however, must be tempered by the fact that the Roman couldn't carry the pharos around with him. There must have been times when without its eight sides, its eight points of reference, he couldn't be quite certain which way was north, which way was east. He couldn't always be sure of his orientation.

That pharos in Dover struck me suddenly as very meaningful to our profession. Like the Roman soldier the teacher of English can be confused, can lack for sure orientation, without a sound and solid guide, without his own pharos. Happily, however, the pharos exists, a soundly constructed eight-sided pharos that does not suffer from the limitation of being anchored in one place. The teacher can

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*Teachers who are interested in teaching English as a second language may want to see how Mr. Allen applies these principles to that area in Virginia French Allen (ed.), *On Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages,* I (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965).

carry this with him; indeed, I would insist that he should never be without it. This pharos consists of eight basic principles derived from the modern study of language known as linguistics.

Teaching English is not an easy job. One reason is that it is not a simple job. It is many jobs: teaching the comprehension of an essay, the grasp of the form of a play, the appreciation of a poem, the writing of a prose composition, an understanding of grammar, and mastery of Standard English usage. But central in all this complexity and diversity, underlying all the manifold aspects of the job, is the inescapable fact that the teacher of English always must deal with language.

How teachers of English deal with language is not then a matter to be treated lightly, to be shunted off to one side as a concern of the specialist. What we think language is and what we think language is for and how we think language works—these questions are essential. I would insist that they are questions to be answered consistently, in the light of insights and basic understanding drawn from modern scholarship.

Most of us inherit a vast mass of inconsistent notions about language. These notions, acquired when we are children, then become an uncritically accepted part of our thinking and of our attitude. If we are teachers, they influence our teaching—and not for the good.

Recently one of my graduate students, Professor Eloise Courter of St. Cloud State College, completed a doctoral investigation of the language concepts entertained by a cross-section of the elementary teachers in Minnesota. Perhaps you can guess what she found—a disturbing variety of notions, superstitions, misinformation, and valid beliefs, inconsistently accepted, inconsistently retained, and—I am afraid—inconsistently applied within the elementary classroom.

Clearly most of these teachers—and this turned out to be somewhat more true of the younger ones and recent graduates—had inherited a weighty mishmash of traditional notions and misstatements into which they had admitted a few scattered bits of sound information derived from such sources and journal articles, convention speeches, and perhaps even a marginal course or two. This whole hodgepodge was serving these teachers as the language basis for the teaching during the 50 to 60 percent of the time they devote to language arts in the elementary school.

But it is neither fair nor helpful to condemn these teachers, or any others in the same situation. During their training they had never been given a valid theoretic foundation, a core of linguistic principles.

They had no adequate standard by which to evaluate statements about the language. If you don't hold to a sound number theory, you can't adjudge that this statement, "Seven times six equals twenty-three," is wrong. If you don't hold to a valid theory of the universe you can easily accept the child's conclusion that the world is flat because it looks flat. And if you don't have a touchstone of linguistic principles, then you may be inclined to approve without question such a statement as this, "A verb agrees with its subject in person and number."

The touchstone for our profession is to be found in the basic principles of linguistics. I am here listing eight. They are all derived from observation and analysis of language, not from philosophizing about it. They are all accepted as axiomatic in the field of linguistics. Here they are:

1. Language is system.
2. Language is vocal.
3. Language is composed of arbitrary symbols.
4. Language is unique.
5. Language is made up of habits.
6. Language is for communication.
7. Language relates to the culture in which it occurs.
8. Language changes.

We must, of course, consider them one at a time, but it is important to keep in mind that one can not accept one of these principles and reject another. They complement each other; they fit together in linguistic theory.

First, language is a system. Any given language, English, is a system—a complex interlocking network of patterns, a complex structure of subsystems. We don't hear language; we don't see language.

Take a familiar analogy, a school system. You as a teacher are in the system. So is your principal; so is your superintendent, and the consultants and the clerks and the building custodians, even, so I am reliably informed, the football coach. You see all these and the buildings in which they work. But you cannot see the system in which they operate nor the theory by which it operates. You infer the existence of the system because you see them functioning within it.

Take another example. On a football field you see twenty-two men similarly dressed, though half with a color variation different from the other eleven. You see three other men with striped black and white shirts. Various things are going on. The three black-and-white stripers are talking together. Some men are running around in circles; some are lying on the ground kicking their legs; four others are throwing an odd-shaped ball back and forth. When a signal sounds, all the men realign themselves, and a complicated series of events occurs. Watching closely, you see that these events occur in patterns, and that there is usually a signal indicating the beginning of a new pattern of action. You are watching the same men in the same place, but now you can say something different about them. You can say that you are watching a football game. Actually, you cannot see a game. You infer the reality of the game from observing the systematic behavior of the units operating within this particular system, which we call a game.

Language also is a system. When we recognize language as system, our treatment of grammar becomes radically different from the elementary grades up. Now we deal with language matters in terms of their structural features—their forms and positions within the system. We identify features of the system in terms of structural signals of one kind or another, signals that overtly indicate relationships within the system. We can no longer talk about a language as composed of words, or consider a dictionary as a major source of information about the language itself. We can no longer talk about a sentence as a group of words expressing a complete thought, or a noun as a name of something. Instead we define such units in terms of form (*wide* and *wideness* and *width* and *widely* and *widen*) and position (*The book costs a lot* and *We book passage for Europe tomorrow*) and combinations of pitch and stress and pause (^{2}Jìm bòught a nêw ^{3}cár^{1} ↓ and ^{2}Jìm bòught a ^{3}néw cảr^{3} ↑).

Recognizing these structural signals, we have new ammunition in our effort to teach sentence punctuation, for now we can relate several elementary punctuation uses to the entire coherent system of signals. Furthermore, recognizing the complexity of the system we see how the English sentence is composed of layer upon layer, not of a series of units in a row as viewed in old-fashioned parsing. We see how in spaces or slots within these structures we can put either single words or other complex structures, and for the first time we find an ordered approach to the problem of helping our students develop maturity in writing English prose. We can now plan a sequence of structural content through all the grades, without the painful and repetitive review that has justifiably alienated so many students.

But a system, though itself abstract, does not exist in a vacuum. A language system is primarily observed through speech, and speech is its primary manifestation. This is the second fundamental principle of our new orientation, that language is vocal. We study it, we characterize it, through speech. Only speech provides all the essential signals of the language. Only in speech can we get a clear picture of English inflection, so obscured by spelling—as the letters *-d* and *-ed* distort the facts of /k/, /t/, or /d/ and /ɨd/. For the first time we can distinguish objectively the primary identifying features of the sentence in terms of pitch and stress and pause. With this systematic classification of these meaningful features we are able to make a new and sharply satisfactory approach to the music and meaning of English poetry.

On a lower and quite practical level we can apply our knowledge of language as system to the relationship between the visual marks or letters and the patterns of English sound-types, what the linguist calls phonemes, and hence find new help in the teaching of English spelling. When spelling of new words is taught by means of random lists, even if the lists are selected in terms of difficulty according to some predetermined range, it is no wonder that students are frustrated. But the letters of English do occur in patterns, although George Bernard Shaw with his silly spelling of *fish* as *ghoti* never found it out. If we teach spelling in terms of the patterns the letters have, most of the spelling troubles our students have will disappear. And when we understand the real relationship between sounds and spelling, we no longer can tell a student to pronounce a word in a certain way because "it is spelled that way." We no longer with unjustified complacency can pride ourselves upon saying /litərətyuwr/ because the word "is spelled that way" and then a few minutes later talk about /neyčər/ and /fiyčər/ and /pikčər/.

If we are concerned with teaching reading, we do not now make the mistake of the teacher of phonics who puts the cart before the horse by beginning with the written letter and talking about sounds as the powers or value of a letter. Instead, by beginning where the child begins, with his already attained control of the sounds, we proceed with a systematic association between sound and visual symbol, and, since our spelling is not so irregular as might be supposed, we do not need to adopt the commercially exploited and privately copyrighted Initial Teaching Alphabet which skilful promotion has already persuaded a number of American teachers to accept. Instead, we can push ahead with experimental programs with the alphabet we already have, such as are now being carried on in Philadelphia by Charles C. Fries and in Miami by Pauline Rojas and will probably be carried on soon in the twenty-seven different reading research projects being considered by the U. S. Office of Education.

What is also of special importance in our meaningful acceptance of the term language arts is that now speech itself becomes significant in its own right and not as a curriculum stepchild called oral English. We now become concerned with the speech of our students because it is the primary manifestation of their use of the language system, of their control of the system, and because in their speech they have a built-in laboratory in which we can help them to study what language is and how it works. We can help them to see and make practical use of the differences between speaking and writing—in vocabulary, in sentence structure, in matters of style, and even in content.

Let's go on. The third basic linguistic principle is that the meaningful symbols of language are arbitrary. They derive their meaning from convention and not by divine commandment. Now on one level this is obvious, of course. We don't call a pig a pig because it is such a dirty animal that any other name wouldn't fit. There is no absolute relationship between a dog and the three sequential phonemes /d/, /ɔ/, and /g/ by which we symbolize it in English. If there were, the French with *chien*, the Germans with *hund*, and the Arabs with *kalb* would all be pretty stupid for not having discovered it. But unless we have been reoriented to accept language for what it is, unless we are consistent in accepting these principles, we might easily accept strange attitudes and hold odd opinions about the relationship between a given symbol and what it stands for. Have you ever offered as a reason for objecting to *awful* the argument that *awful music* doesn't necessarily fill one with awe, and that *terrible* weather isn't necessarily *terrifying?* Have you ever complained about a student's use of *disinterested* on the grounds that this word simply cannot ever mean the same as *uninterested*, or that *contact* cannot be used as a verb? In short, we can be tempted to become quite arbitrary ourselves if we forget that language symbols are arbitrary.

The next fundamental orienting principle I listed, the fourth, is that language is unique. No two languages have the same set of patterns—of sounds, of grammatical signals, of words, or of syntax. English is not German, nor French, nor Arabic, nor Chinese, nor Latin. It is not Latin. I must repeat that, because we have been misled for many years into thinking that it is Latin, either derived from Latin or very much like Latin. Neither of these notions is true.

Suppose I say *The dog ate a mouse.* You know who did what to whom. You know because I put *dog* first and *mouse* last. If I use the same words unchanged but in this order, *The mouse ate the dog,* I say something quite different. You may not believe it; you may think I'm crazy to say it; but you certainly know what I'm saying. You know which one I think got eaten. It was the dog. Now that kind of thing—the statement I mean, not the act—is possible in English. Let's look at Latin. I want to say again that the dog did the eating, so I'll say *Canis* (dog) *edit* (ate or has eaten) *murem* (a mouse). So far, so good. But now I want to say, believe it or not, that the mouse did the eating. If I reverse the order and say *Murem edit canis* I don't tell you that at all. I have said exactly the same thing, that the dog did the eating. All I did by putting *murem* first was to indicate that I considered the mouse more important than the dog. If I want to persist in saying that the mouse ate the dog, then I must say *Mus edit canem.* How do we know who got eaten? By the change in the shape of the words—*mus* to *murem, canis* to *canem.* Furthermore, suppose I want to say *I ate,* then I use *edi;* if I want to say *you,* a single one of you, *ate,* then I say *edisti.* We ate is *edimus,* you (plural) ate is *edistis,* and they ate is *ederunt.* Clearly a language that behaves in this amazing fashion is not very much like English.

At this point I have deliberately gone into some detail because our traditional grammar has unhappily given us a whole set of statements that are taken from Latin grammar and that we have stubbornly persisted in using as if they are also true of English grammar. This would be pretty funny if it were not so tragic in terms of frustration and wasted time, at least for the students if not for the teachers. (Some teachers, people being as full of quirks as they are, find that they have become so emotionally attached to traditional Latinate grammar that they argue for it without regard to its effect upon the student.) Well, let's have some examples. Here's a familiar one. "A verb agrees with its subject in person and number." So it does, in Latin. No argument about that. But how about English? In the present indicative there are six possible places where such agreement could occur—first, second, and third persons singular and plural. In the past tense there are six more; that's twelve. If we recognize a subjunctive in English, that's twelve more, or a total of twenty-four. Actually in how many of these twenty-four possible places for subject-verb agreement do we find such agreement? The answer is: one. It occurs in the so-called third person singular present indicative. I submit that a statement that is only 1/24 correct is 23/24 incorrect.

Here's another statement. "English has six tenses. Now a tense is a change in the shape of a verb to show a corresponding change in time. Latin does have six tenses. If in Latin I want to indicate that I expect to eat breakfast tomorrow I use not *edo* (I eat) nor *edebam* (I ate), but *edebo.* Do we have anything like that in English? Of course not. I can say *I eat* breakfast tomorrow in Minneapolis, *I will eat, I shall eat, I am to eat, I am eating, I am going to eat, I expect to eat, I may eat, I must eat, I might eat, I ought to eat,* and so on to a total of about twenty-five different expressions. But not one of them is a future tense.

Well, we could go on, but perhaps that's enough to suggest how important it is for us to accept the uniqueness of language, the uniqueness of English. If we are to look at our language clearly and honestly, with the eyes of a linguist, then we have to describe English as it is, and not in terms inherited from descriptions of a quite different language.

How we happened to inherit those terms and statements, how they happened to be deeply infixed in the schools of this country, is a long story, much too long to be told now. In capsule outline it is simply that a description of old-fashioned and archaic Greek, prepared in the first century B.C., was first translated into Latin and used to describe classical Latin. Ultimately this Latin grammar was translated in English and used to teach Latin. That was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Finally this same grammar was applied to the teaching of English in the eighteenth century, with little awareness that the two languages are fundamentally different. That's what we have had to work with in the schools, decades after a more truthful picture could have been obtained from modern scholars of language.

From the fourth principle, that language is unique, we move on to the fifth, which is that language is made up of habits. Most of what is going on as I talk to you now is a matter of habit. It is habitual for me, as a native speaker of English, to pronounce sounds the way I do. I don't stop to think that now I put the tongue-tip against the alveolar ridge and withdraw it sharply with a slight puff of breath, next constrict the vocal cords while the lips round slightly and the tongue bunches up toward the back before it moves upward and backward in a slight relaxing glide. If I had to think of all that I might never be able to pronounce the simple syllable *toe* that I just described. It is a matter of habit for me to use pitch and stress and pause as I am using them now. It is a matter of habit for me to arrange words in the order you now follow, for me to use the particular forms I am now using—to say, for instance, *I am* and not *I is* nor *I be* nor *I are*. I do not have to stop to think my way through these many choices.

This basic principle is of great importance to us as teachers. Just as it is important to the teacher of English as a foreign language, so it is important to us when we seek to develop in our students control of a dialect which is not their native dialect, for what we then are doing is developing new habits alongside old habits. If you have a student who says *I done it*, who, indeed, uses any nonstandard form or pronunciation, you will have difficulty in getting him to use a replacement form by telling him he is wrong or by making neat little red hieroglyphics in the margin of a written paper. A good many studies over the past fifty years have shown that this kind of correction does no good to anyone except the manufacturer of red ink. And it does no good precisely for the reason that habits are not acquired through prescription but through practice.

That is, in a school where teaching of Standard English has to be a major concern because of the language background of the students, awareness of this principle of linguistics should lead to a certain sequence of action on the part of the English faculty. There should be a contrastive study of the nonstandard grammar and pronunciation of the community in relation to standard features of the area. This study should lead to a planned series of activities according to a certain ratio between the standard and nonstandard items. Such activities would include pattern practice, mim-mem recitation, and substitution drill—activities similar to those in a good class in a foreign language. Indeed, if school facilities include a language laboratory, it should be used for this very purpose.

There are other respects, of course, in which the habitual nature of language learning can be relevant to our teaching—vocabulary acquisition, punctuation, and speaking; but I must go on.

The sixth fundamental is that language is for communication. A great deal is implied by awareness of that principle. If when we talk or write our purpose is to communicate, not just to have fun in composing, then the relationship of our language choices to the receiver of the communication is all-important. If what we say is ever so perfect but unintelligible, we do not communicate; we have not used language effectively. If our language forms call attention to themselves and hence away from the intended meaning, we do not communicate effectively. If our language forms mean something different to the receiver from what they do to us, then certainly we do not communicate.

In the past we have not been as aware of language as communication as we should have been. The very word that is our classificatory term, *composition,* throws the emphasis in the wrong place, upon the means rather than the end. It implies that what is important is the process of putting words together and not the process of getting meaning across to someone else. Composition is only an intermediate step in the process.

Do we require that the student have in mind a specific reader or group of readers? Do we insist, as our colleagues in speech long have done, that our students think of the characteristics of the people to whom they want to communicate? Do we insist that our students make their choice of vocabulary and grammar and sentence forms in accord with the type of person they are writing to? Do we, in short, pay any really significant attention to audience analysis in our teaching of writing? I don't mean analysis of the teacher, either; students are acute enough in ascertaining the teacher's preferences. I mean rather that we insist upon the student's deliberately choosing a specific audience, attempting to analyze that audience's relevant characteristics, and then making choices of language forms to suit that particular audience whatever it may be—the student's own class, readers of the local paper, members of the PTA, subscribers to a hobby magazine, a Boy Scout troop, a church organization, and so on.

Increasingly research by psycholinguists is demonstrating the extraordinary effect of subtleties in word meaning upon the receiver of language. As they continue their studies in—to use a term familiar to the older semanticists—the semantic differential, we are going to find still greater help as we try to teach our students increased sensitivity to language in human communication.

I have given only an inkling of the wide area that must be our concern if we sincerely accept the principle that language is essentially for communication and not for exercise in composition.

Two more principles I must discuss. The next, number seven, is that language is related to the culture in which it is used. I am not now referring to the Whorf-Hoijer hypothesis that human beings are language-bound in their analysis of the universe and its phenomena, although a discussion of that would be appropriate. I refer rather to somewhat more obvious relationships.

It is true that linguists, at least many American linguists, have liked to analyze a language almost as if it exists in a vacuum. This is a neat and tidy way of observing its structural features without interference from matters that are not easily quantifiable. But they know perfectly well that actually language does not exist in a vacuum. Language exists only in the behavior of its speakers, and its speakers themselves exist in specific places and in specific social situations, temporary and permanent.

Consider their existence in place. English is the daily instrument of people in Iowa, or Minnesota, and in Texas, Maine, Alaska; and in England and Canada and New Zealand. People in these places don't all talk alike. You and I, of course, use a perfectly normal English without any peculiarities. But those people in Alabama! And the Australians! I heard a speaker in Lancashire who might have been talking Bantu so far as communicating to me was concerned. Surely a very funny kind of English. Well, it's natural to think that the speech of one's own state or region or country is better than the speech of anywhere else, but it really isn't very bright of us if we think that, for thinking that violates the principle that language does and must relate to where it is. The implication for us as teachers is clear: we must help our students to recognize that regional difference, dialect variation, is not an equivalent of qualitative difference.

Do you say *cottage cheese, clabber cheese,* or *Dutch cheese?* Some years ago did you jump face down on a sled and go *belly-flop, belly-bump,* or *belly-buster?* Do you pull down the *shades* or *blinds* or *curtains?* Are you sometimes *sick in your stomach, at your stomach,* or *to your stomach?* Do you say /kriyk/ or /krik/, /ruwf/ or /ruf/, /dawntawn/ or dæwntæwn/? I happen to say Dutch cheese, and belly-flop and curtain, and sick to my stomach. If you don't, am I right and are you wrong? Or are you right and am I wrong? Of course not. The abbreviation *dial.* is not a label that an entry is a dirty word.

Now all these differences in American English correspond to the original settlements along the Atlantic coast and the wide sweep of the population movement westward over the Appalachians and across the plains. They are in themselves a rich and fruitful and exciting subject for study in your classes. What are the kinds of differences between the speech of your students in northern Iowa and the speech in southern Iowa, between the Midwest and the East, between the Midwest and the South? What special features can your students find in southeastern Iowa if that is where you are teaching? Perhaps our own community exhibits a blend of different regional features. That in itself is worth some study. What is the source of the blend? How much attention should be given to these differences when one communicates with people from outside your own area? Now that the NCTE has published Jean Malmstrom's *Dialects—USA* every high school teacher has a new and useful source for providing this kind of information and for stimulating interest on the part of his students.

But let's consider also that speakers exist in different social situations—situations which differ according to the education of the speakers, their occupation, and, sometimes, various special religious and hobby interests. Another kind of difference is in the tone of the situation, its measure of formality, its degree of emotional involvement, and the like.

Speaker A has little formal education and works as an unskilled laborer. He uses language forms—grammar and vocabulary and pronunciation—which are adequate for the load he puts upon them. He communicates effectively in the rather restricted social contacts he makes. Speaker B is a high school graduate with a job requiring technical competence. He has some forms different from those of Speaker A, and he has a number of forms, particularly lexical, for which Speaker A has no usable equivalents. All these forms do the job for him. Speaker C is a college and professional school graduate in a vocation calling for high communication skill and offering the opportunity for community leadership. Speaker C has some still different grammatical items, vocabulary items, and even some different sentence patterns. Further, all three speakers vary their own speech according to whether they are talking formally or informally, to friends or to strangers, to one person or a group. I might add that Speaker C also writes frequently for publication and then uses what linguists call the literary dialect. Now I want to stress one very important thing: no form used by any of these speakers is in itself correct or incorrect. No form can be incorrect if it does the primary job of communicating meaning. But a form may be desperately out of place, inappropriate and unsuitable, if it does not accord with the speaker, the hearer, and the situation.

What I have been talking about just now is, of course, this troubled question of usage, a topic that has made many a classroom a temporary battleground. But from the point of view of the linguist—in our new reorientation, that is—all these considerations of usage belong within the study of the correlation of language forms with the environment, a kind of applied linguistics. From the point of view of the teacher in our kind of society we see the need to help our students control those language features which are characteristics of the dialect of Speaker C. His speech is what we might call Standard English. But note this point. The linguist would say that in doing this we must not make the mistake of trying to get the student to reject his nonstandard forms as wrong or incorrect (and hence, perhaps, the speech of his parents). We must teach him the standard forms in addition to the earlier habits. I did not have to unlearn habits of bicycle riding when I learned to drive an automobile. I can still ride a bike. I did not have to unlearn one set of gear-shifting habits when I bought a European car with four speeds. I did not have to unlearn either set of habits when I next acquired a car with automatic shift. Now I can drive all three varieties. We can help our students to do likewise with their English.

Finally, we come to the eighth fundamental principle. It is this: language changes. All these features and aspects and characteristics of language that have been mentioned are subject to change. Some features of language change slowly, such as sentence patterns. Three centuries may be involved. Some may change more rapidly, like the adoption of the progressive *-ing* verb phrase in the eighteenth century, or the current spread of the alveolar tap for /t/ in /weytɨŋ/. Some may change almost overnight, such as the adoption of *sputnik*.

Since language does change, whether we like it or not, clearly what we say about it today may not be true tomorrow. What we may say about the language of Shakespeare is not necessarily true about the language today. And what a dictionary of 1934 reports about the language certainly does not describe the language of 1961.

When we recognize this fact we see that just as doctors need to keep up with changes in medical knowledge, so we who teach English need to keep up with changes in linguistic knowledge and in the language itself.

Two hundred fifty years ago Swift denounced the word *mob*. Today we use it without hesitation. One hundred fifty years ago Samuel Johnson attacked the word *clever* as a "low" term. Today we use it without question. One hundred years ago the expression *had better* as in *You'd better go home* was called indefensible. Today we all use it. Fifty years ago the conjunctional use of *like* was labeled incorrect in all schools and freshman grammars. Today I hear it frequently, not only in television commercials about the taste of a cigarette but also in the speech of university professors.

But becoming aware of change in our own language calls for more than acknowledging the obsolescence of one form and the birth of a new one. It calls for helping our students to feel something of the great sweep of change through the centuries, to learn of the basic shift from the status of English as a language in which inflection dominated to its status as a language in which word order is dominant. We can no longer be content to treat the history of the language in terms of its borrowed vocabulary. We must deal with the internal history, the changes in the language itself, in the changes within the system, as Old English slowly became Middle English and Middle English became Modern English, as the wandering adjective settled down to its position before the noun, as the subject lost its identifying nominative shape and likewise anchored itself in a position before the verb, as the verb itself, temporarily frustrated by this fixed position in questions and negations, solved the problem by making over the word *do* as a kind of grammatical carrier pigeon so that now we say *did he eat* instead of *ate he* and *he didn't eat* for *he ate not*. All this is content for our teaching.

By now I hardly need to make explicit, then, a second point I am seeking to make in this talk. The first I have stated in detail, that the teacher of English inevitably must deal with language and that he must therefore have a sound and consistent orientation that can be provided by an understanding and acceptance of eight basic linguistic principles. The second is that if these principles are so important, then the facts upon which they depend are themselves valid content for the high school course. Communication in the English language does itself provide subject matter for our students. It is with this in mind that we at the University of Minnesota are seeking in our Project English operation to construct a six-year junior-senior high school sequence in which language content is central. It is up to the individual English teacher, who has presumably acquired proper orientation to language study, to include some of this language content in the work of his English classes.

THE NATURE AND ORGANIZATION OF LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE STUDY

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In the King James translation of the Bible, the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of the Book of Ruth goes thus: "And when she came to her mother-in-law she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her." If you put Naomi's question to me, and if I put it to you, the common answer will be "English teachers"—although with some of you the label may apply more to intentions than to current performance. Now, in that common role, I ask you to read that verse again: "And when she came to her mother-in-law she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her." If any one of us found this passage in a student composition, he would tell the student that his pronouns were running around loose like so many mavericks and remind him of the necessity for definite pronoun reference.

One of the duties assigned to English teachers is to act as experts on language, and together we must increase our ability to act in this capacity. When a question of usage is referred to me, I feel obligated to supply an answer—an answer appropriate to the situation which inspired the question. But I feel dismayed and frustrated when anyone thinks that my competence and interest in language are limited to such questions—when I am regarded as one whose concern with language is confined to such questions as the proper sequence of *i* and *e* in words like *receive* and *believe* or the selection of the proper word in sentences like "I feel badly." I feel bad, very bad, when people regard me as primarily a monitor of other people's usage, although I freely admit, even insist, that this function is included among the obligations I assumed when I became a teacher of English. The purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the things we should know as experts on language, beyond, but not apart from, our obligations to those whose linguistic habits need to be altered.

Before doing that, however, I shall refer again to Naomi's question—"Who art thou?" I have asked it of myself regarding you, and you should have an answer to it regarding me. Only a few years ago, nearly all English teachers would hold fairly uniform beliefs and attitudes about language and about the details of the English language. But this essential uniformity no longer exists, nor is it likely to return within the near future. Some may still be saying that English has five vowels—*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*—and may still think that the traditional definitions of parts of speech set off mutually exclusive classes of words. The February 1964 issue of the *English Journal* contains evidence that many English teachers still do. On the other hand, some may be perfectly competent to teach a grammar course within the context supplied by recent scholarship and to write a paper such as this one. Readers in the first category will get scant comfort from my remarks, and those in the second will find little that they do not know already. When such diversity of opinion exists, a writer must pretend that it does not, and I have chosen to adopt this view, accepting any consequences that may ensue.

Now I'll explain my identity. When Naomi said, "Who art thou?" she knew the simple answer—that it was Ruth, her daughter-in-law, the widow of Mahlon. What she wanted to know was Ruth's current status—how she stood in respect to the immediate circumstances. You know the simple answer regarding me. What I wish to explain is my immediate status—the professional role which I play. To put it briefly, I am a member of a university English department, differing from other members of this department in that my specialty is the English language rather than an author, period, or type in English literature. As long as my title included a restrictive adjective, I was ordinarily assigned a lower division course—either freshman composition or sophomore literature. I say this, not to solicit your sympathy, but to indicate that my professional affiliations are in the humanities and that my professional commitments are to the customary values of a liberal education. In other words, both the intensional and extensional meanings of the label "English teacher" apply to me.

I expect those who register for my courses to become more competent in all their uses of the language—to read with more acuteness and to write with more sophistication. This does not mean that my motives are exclusively, or even primarily, utilitarian. It does not mean that the results are confined to such practical applications as the ability to spot a nonrestrictive modifier or to choose *me* rather than *myself* in a compound object, although I deal with both in a grammar course. Instead, it reflects a conviction that understanding the nature of language and being consciously aware of how the English language works should help anyone attack any problem within the subject called English with greater intellectual resources. However, I do not urge the acquisition of linguistic skills as a motive. I think that students on just about every level, but more especially those between the elementary school and the graduate school are less concerned with acquiring skills than they are with acquiring knowledge.

If a subject is interesting, if it excites intellectual curiosity and leads to intellectual satisfaction, it will have its share of student time and interest. I have become convinced that most students dread boredom more than they dread difficulty, and that we should pay more attention to dullness in the subject than to dullness in the student. The chief drawback to traditional grammar is not that it contains false statements, as it surely does, but that it is so tedious. A teacher who can present traditional grammar as the operational rules of a living language is doing a good job as a language teacher, no matter how he defines a verb or analyzes a sentence, provided, of course, he does point out lots of verbs and analyze lots of sentences. All that language scholarship can do for such a teacher is give him a better —that is, more comprehensive and accurate—formulation of these operational rules. I can say something like this because a teacher who investigates the matter fully will discover that he is not teaching the operational rules of a living language but those of a dead one.

To insist that language study is an important part of the school program is neither revolutionary nor controversial. Two of the three *r*'s imply it. Even a reading readiness program implies it. The issue is not whether we should teach language and at least something about the English language. Indeed, anyone who teaches composition or reading is dealing with language in a practical way and is displaying some aspects of a general theory of language, at least by implication. And when I refer to the teaching of reading, I include the teaching of literature, for the second activity is a continuation of the first—acquiring a few components and losing others but continuing those that are fundamental. If anyone tries to teach, say, *Lord of the Flies,* and does not teach his students how to read this or any other novel, he is, I think, misconstruing his obligations. Anyone who is not teaching his students how to read literature is not a good teacher of literature, no matter how well his students do when taking an English achievement test.

The real controversies in language teaching are at bottom, disputes over aims and content. The older tradition tried to justify itself as a utilitarian subject. Its defenders continue the argument on this issue and that of expediency. But the newer approaches are essentially cultural in their aims. They are, in their objectives, closer to the general values of the humanities, to the general aims of a liberal education. Lest you misunderstand me, I consider these to be a wide knowledge of subjects in which human interests predominate, the discovery of truth in these areas, and the ability to make independent and valid decisions in them. What is more human than language or more immediate to us as members of human communities?

Although the newer approaches have brought in many new terms, indeed many new sets of terms, the change is less in classification and terminology than it is in fundamental method. The shift is from dogma to discovery, from assumed universals to existing particulars, from a priori speculation to the evidence of history and observation. In their common essence, these approaches are the methods any thoughtful person would use in reaching any practical conclusion. One basic fallacy in the older tradition has been clearly illustrated in the recent outbursts against *Webster's Third New International.* Many of the journalists who commented on this dictionary assumed that legislative dictionaries were needed to keep the language effective as a literary vehicle. They apparently did not realize that no comprehensive dictionary of English existed until the eighteenth century.

It is paradoxical that some of the most violent attacks on contemporary linguistic methods and conclusions have come from persons who say that modern linguistics is anti-intellectual. But the paradox is less when one discovers that their notion of intellectualism is actually rationalism, in the philosophical sense, and that their arguments display a strong tinge of intellectual fascism. If anti-intellectualism is defined as hostility toward those who inquire, discover, and teach, then they are the anti-intellectuals. I realize this is name-calling, and that most of these people would deny the allegation, but they simply have not examined their basic assumptions about language, or they have not compared these assumptions with the historical evidence. I also realize that *most* of the attacks come from persons who understand neither the limitations of the old nor the conclusions of the new. For a good many years, I have been saying that the results of linguistic study are not antithetical to the aims of instruction in composition and in literature, if the results are properly understood and the aims are properly conceived. And I see no reason to change this opinion. I said it after Fries, and I can still say it after Chomsky.

Now, I'll pass on to the problem of content, and by that I mean not so much the general topics of the curriculum as the details within each topic. There is vigorous controversy in just about every part of the school program to which linguistic study is applicable, from beginning reading to learning French. But the essential differences are less serious than they appear to be, for they are intermixed with a great welter of confusion. Linguistics is best defined as the study of human speech—that is, as a set of related procedures for compiling information about a particular field. Using these methods, scholars have accumulated a great deal of information about language and about individual languages. The first task is to insert this information into the curriculum at appropriate places.

In some areas, notably the grammatical structure of English, this information is tentative and fragmentary. When this situation exists, one should present some details as information and others as working hypotheses. English grammar includes some morphology and this part is pretty well understood. But most of English grammar is in the area of syntax, and this part is not so well understood. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to show some of the simpler patterns and to teach students how to find these in existing sentences. The most important revision of the program is already possible. One can shift the emphasis from memorizing statements about the grammar to formulating statements about it. This can be started about the time the pupils can handle a simple reader. One is then teaching some linguistics, giving some training in a method of investigation, but this seems to be the best of the courses which are now open. Once students begin to look at the language itself for answers to questions about it, the head of the camel is under the tent. Any grammatical description which is encountered later can be understood more easily.

People sometimes ask me to suggest the grade level at which linguistics should first be introduced, meaning not the methods of linguistic analysis but conclusions about English resulting from these methods. I counter this question with another: "In what grade does a teacher or textbook first make any statement about the language or its representation in writing? The point is that every such statement should be an accurate statement, and all such statements should be consistent with each other. A structural approach to English grammar seems to be more difficult than it is intrinsically, because students have been so thoroughly indoctrinated in a different approach. They must first learn that they are not simply getting additional information but a different frame of reference.

A recent textbook distinguishes between a linguist and a grammarian, but this is like a distinction between mathematics and algebra. The study of grammar is a speciality within linguistics. I think of myself as a grammarian, whatever others may think. People sometimes ask me whether I favor a linguistic approach to learning a foreign language. The question itself is tautological. There is no way to learn a language that is not a linguistic way. The present controversy involves three major issues. First, whether an approach through words and paradigms is better than an approach through patterns and constituents, and that is a pedagogical issue. Second, the amount of phonology that should be included and the order of its inclusion—also an issue that is chiefly one of method and aim. And third, the description of phonology and grammar which should be used in presenting the details of the language to be learned. This last is, of course, a linguistic rather than a pedagogical issue, but it is the only one of the three that is.

Similar distinctions can be made in the controversy over how to teach reading and in the controversy over how to teach punctuation. In all such pedagogical applications, we must distinguish between matters of linguistics and matters of pedagogy. Certain discoveries about language seem to indicate certain methods for dealing with certain difficulties, but nevertheless, the validity of the discoveries is not necessarily proven or disproven by the success or failure of these methods. You will understand this better if you are given an illustration. Some years ago, after the publication of the Trager-Smith description of supra-segmental phonemes, some people tried to relate junctures directly with marks of punctuation, for the function of terminal junctures in speech is parallel to the function of punctuation in writing. Some even called this *the* linguistic approach to punctuation. Well, as a few language scholars immediately predicted, this way to teach punctuation was not a complete success. Intonation is only one of the factors governing the selection of punctuation marks, and, in my opinion, not even the primary factor. This result, therefore, did not show that a structural description was not helpful in teaching punctuation, but only that the problem had not been correctly analyzed. It did not even show that recognition of junctures was not helpful. Indeed, it can be very useful when combined with other considerations, as many teachers soon discovered.

The appearance of confusion is magnified also by the habit of language scholars, like those in other fields, to argue their differences rather than to point out their concurrences. Laymen often do not realize that their disputes are held within a context of considerable agreement. For example, Ralph B. Long calls himself a traditional grammarian, but he does not classify words into eight parts of speech. Analyzing sentences into immediate constituents is radically different from generating them by rules of transformation, but no one in either camp would describe the English verb system in terms of a Latin model of six tenses, or believes that any linguistic system reflects a universally valid system of logic. Scholars in the field of English language have held essentially the same views on usage and linguistic standards for nearly a century. Current discussions of these matters are simply refinements on a fundamental position that was fully established before Leonard Bloomfield, C. C. Fries, or Philip Gove were born.

This has been a long introduction, but now we are ready to get at the purpose of this paper. Let us discuss some of the things English teachers should know as experts on language, things any English teacher should know, regardless of his specialty or his teaching level. In fact, I'll go further and say that most of the generalizations about language which I shall present should be known to any college graduate, and they will eventually be known by any high school graduate.

First, let us consider the word *language* as an item in the English vocabulary. This is not as simple a matter as it seems to be, for the item has two similar but distinct grammatical ranges, and in this case, the grammatical ranges mark off semantic ranges. The item is often used as a mass noun, and I have been so using it. This sense is illustrated in the following sentence, which I want you to remember: "Language is surely one of man's first inventions." Nevertheless, definitions of the item *language* generally treat it as a count noun, even when they attempt to cover its uses in both capacities. Thus: language is a means of human communication utilizing signs which are conventional in nature and, primarily, vocal in form, constituting a system. When I said that language was surely one of man's first inventions, the statement had to mean that certain men invented a particular language—or that certain groups of men invented certain languages, plural. We use the term *language* as a mass noun—that is, one, like *freedom* or *love*, which denotes a homogeneous concept—but the only manifestation to which it can refer is a specific instance or system, or is a set of common attributes shared by a number of instances or systems. I have said all this to emphasize the fact that statements about language are valid only when they reflect instances of linguistic activity. The nature of language is such that a priori methods cannot be usefully employed to study it. Although all of us feel, at times, that we are using intuition in forming linguistic conclusions, I feel sure that this intuition is really a product of subliminal memory.

The term *language* is, of course, used in a variety of meanings that extend from the basic meaning, and I shall mention one of these in order to post a warning. Given the occasion, one of us might say "Shakespeare's language is very effective" or "Shakespeare's use of language is very effective." Although these statements make very nearly the same point, the term *language* does not have the same meaning in each. When one says "Shakespeare's language," the word *language* means Shakespeare's selection from the resources of Elizabethan English and the way he used this selection. When one says "Shakespeare's use of language," the term *language* refers to the whole of Elizabethan English. It is wider in its reference.

Now for the point. Some modern writers complain that modern English has deteriorated, *as a language,* using as their evidence certain instances of infelicitous writing. But current English, *as a language,* is not limited to anyone's selection of words from it, or to anyone's habits of putting them into meaningful sequence. Commentators who think that a language deteriorates because some people use it carelessly are confusing language with style. No one uses a whole language; everyone selects from it. When the Hotel Syracuse Men's Shop holds its annual January sale, I go down and pick out a suit I like. I don't have to buy that disgusting chromatic nightmare next to it. It happens that I do not like the word *finalize.* To the best of my knowledge, I have never used it except to cite it. But my antipathy to it is a reaction to the company it keeps. I cannot, on this basis, call it a linguistic absurdity, knowing that it is intrinsically just as legitimate as *equalize,* a word I do use. Words are to be judged by the work they can do anyway, and by the company they keep, not by any suspicions as to the circumstances of their birth. The next time you can, look up the word *greensleeves* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and see if what you learn about it makes the song any less tuneful.

The common denominator in the various senses of the term *language* is included in the term *symbol.* In their ordinary use, morphemes, words, and patterns of words are perceptible signs standing for, or representing, something we call meaning. The only definition we can give for meaning is that it is the product, import, effect, or consequence resulting from a perceptible sign or sequence of signs. The meaning of a particular linguistic item is the contribution it makes to an appropriate context. When discussing human language, either in its primary state, speech, or as represented in writing, one can consider this matter of representation in either of two ways—either by relating a set of forms to a set of meanings, or by regarding the forms and the meanings as aspects of signs, a language then being a system of signs, each sign having a form and a meaning.

In either event, both forms and meanings in a language are structures, with the forms and the meanings operating not as independent items but as members of systems. It is easy to show that linguistic forms are structured. The phonological items in a language constitute a structure which functions by means of contrasts, by means of acoustic distinctions within a system, rather than by means of acoustic qualities independent of a system. Any paradigm or syntactic pattern is a structure. Sometimes, however, the structuring is not so obvious. Consider the meanings of *see* in each of the following sentences: "I see the doctor now" and "I see the doctor tomorrow."

One way to show the structuring of meaning in a language is to compare corresponding words in the vocabularies of different languages. For instance, the French word *veau* refers to a calf and to the flesh of a calf used as food. Another way is to compare synonyms in the same language. My son has been going through the difficulties of finding a college which he wants and which wants him. I have therefore been reading some college catalogues lately. In one, this sentence appears: "Graduates of X college have experienced success in many fields." Whoever wrote this sentence could have used the word *achieved* as the verb in this sentence, but he could not have used *undergone*. We experience or achieve success—if we are fortunate, but we do not undergo success. We experience or undergo surgery, but we do not achieve surgery. If we *do* say we undergo success or achieve surgery, we are using a type of irony. The words in a vocabulary constitute a particular classification, or structuring of what is communicable.

Meanings, however, are not side by side and touching, like tiles in a floor; instead they are ranges which overlap other ranges, more like shingles on a roof, the immediate import, or focus, being specified by elements in either the verbal or nonverbal context, or both. Nevertheless, despite such overlaps, words necessarily impose some measure of discreteness. At what size of individual particles does sand become gravel and when does a shower become a rain or a rain become a downpour? The complex of discreteness and overlap in one language is always unique to it. Although it may agree at many points with the complex in another, it is never in total agreement with another. Anyone who seriously tries to translate from one language to another eventually discovers this.

Linguistic structuring of a somewhat different kind also exists. For example, a single-word verb in Latin necessarily includes a morpheme of time, and the morpheme indicating future time differs in form but not in kind from that indicating past time. In English, on the other hand, past time and future time are indicated by means that differ in kind. All the modal auxiliaries can express future time in some contexts, and all the verb patterns that can follow *will* can also follow *may*. English, Russian, and Latin all have ways to handle time meanings and aspect meanings but these differ in each language. The simple present in English, incidentally, seldom indicates action going on at the present time, and such an example as "He writes the letter," taken from a college workbook, is very nearly a grammatical absurdity.

Such differences as these do not mean that one language is better than another or can say things another cannot, but only that they perform their functions in different ways. French has no verb used exactly like the English *do*, as in "He walks faster than I do," but no one would use this fact as evidence that the French people cannot say anything they wish to. At any rate, De Gaulle seems to be doing so.

The relationship between language and reality is a matter for dispute. There are some who say that the only realities are, in a sense, linguistically shaped, but I don't know enough about reality to form an opinion. If this contention is true, however, bilinguals must have access to more realities than the rest of us, and considering my own, one is enough. Nevertheless, there is obviously some connection between our language and the concepts we form as to reality, but whether this connection is determinative is properly a question for a student of philosophy rather than of language, and philosophers have lately been concerning themselves with it. I am not a philosopher—in either the technical or the popular sense of the term.

But, to understand the nature of language, some appreciation of this connection is necessary. We have all heard the incantation—the word is not the thing; the map is not the territory. And for a long time we used definitions based on classes of meaning to define some classes of words. A good many structural linguists have pointed out that this is an evil and sinful habit. Indeed it does put Dobbin behind the wagon rather than in front of it, where he belongs. If our only definition of a noun is that a noun is the name of a person, place, or thing, etc., it provides little distinction between *rest* in "the rest of them" and *some* in "some of them." We assign *rest* to the class of nouns, if we do, because the preceding *the* tells us to, not because there is any sharp demarcation between the kind of meaning it has and the kind *some* has. At best, and even when it works, such a definition is tautological, for the only way we can explain what is to be considered as a thing, etc., in English, is to start giving a list of English nouns. In doubtful instances, such as *lightning, fist,* and *tallness,* a speaker of English decides what to regard as a thing by reference to a grammatical category, not the other way around. If the concept in question is represented by a noun it is a thing; and so we go, round and round, like a dog after his tail.

The traditional definition of a sentence also has built-in circularity. If I see a successful mugging and the thief running down the street with a purse in his hand, I can say "an escaping thief" or "the thief is escaping." And either statement covers the event itself or the reaction it has stimulated in me, but one is a sentence and the other is not. When we say "a sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought," we are getting our notion of completeness in thought from our recognition of whether a sentence has been used to express it. In other words, English, like many languages, communicates meaning by cutting it up into units of meaning. But the cutting process is in the language, not inherent in the meanings themselves. Incidentally, I would like both of those definitions better if they were turned around, producing "a name of a person, place, or thing, etc., is a noun" and "a group of words expressing a complete thought is a sentence."

This is a good context for demonstrating a structural approach to grammar. I write some word such as *room* on the blackboard and then ask for a decision as to its part of speech. Usually some unwary or over-eager individual will say that it is a noun. Then I write the word *they* before *room* and the word *here* after it, and repeat the question. This time everyone smiles, except the one who spoke too soon, and we agree that it is a verb. Then I ask, "How do you know?" Well, someone will say, "Because it identifies an action," and I will know that someone has a good memory. Then, I will say "How do you know?" again, and the class will begin to talk about word order. The point is obvious. The traditional approach is to focus on meaning, and the structural approach, in its several versions, is to focus on ways to convey meaning.

Usually, I continue with a subversive ploy aimed at undermining their confidence in their high school English instruction. I write "the room here" under "they room here" and admit that *room* is a noun in that sequence. Then I ask what kind of noun, and everyone agrees that it is a common noun. Next, I ask what kind of common noun and get a few tentative references to abstract and concrete, but these are unsatisfactory even to those who make them. Then I write "some room" and "a room" and, with practically all students, I am in new territory. They discover something new and unexpected about English grammar, which I develop by calling attention to the effects of *much* and *many* as modifiers. I have found that some demonstration such as this is far more effective than any number of statements about the death and burial of grammarians; besides it does the job without bruising so many toes.

Now, since I have no better place in this discussion for the topic, I'll take a moment about lexical meaning and structural, or grammatical, meaning. I suppose everyone who considers this distinction follows the lead of C. C. Fries and draws on Charles L. Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, but this is a much more dangerous distinction than some people realize. We can divide the English vocabulary more or less into two parts, as Fries does, but it is a mistake to say that all the words in one group convey lexical meaning only and that those in the other convey only grammatical meaning. For example, *engagement* contains a morpheme conveying grammatical meaning, indicating that it is a noun, and *liquefy* contains a morpheme showing that it is a verb. But suffixes of this type are not always purely grammatical markers. Besides *liquefy,* a verb, there is another verb, *liquidate,* with a different lexical meaning. Also, *womanly* and *womanish* are both adjectives made from nouns by the addition of suffixes, but they differ in lexical meaning. Anyone who uses the term would call *may* and *should* function words, or, if you prefer, structure words, but they also have lexical meanings as distinct as *permission* and *obligation.* Lexical and grammatical meaning are distinct kinds of meaning, but both kinds may be resident in the same word. Just consider all the uses of *get.* Moreover, if one is careless in his definition of determiners, he will find that it is somewhat open as a class. Consider *John's book* beside *this book.*

Up to this point, I have been discussing language in such a way as to imply certain characteristics. It is time now to make these more explicit. In his book *Introduction to Linguistic Structures,* A. A. Hill lists five as basic and as applicable to the term *language* in linguistic study. These are

1. A language is a set of sounds;

2. The connection between the sounds, or sequences of sounds, and objects of the outside world is arbitrary and unpredictable;
3. A language is systematic;
4. A language is a set of symbols—that is to say, a language has meaning;
5. A language is complete.

I have inserted an indefinite article before the term *language* in giving this list, but I don't think Professor Hill would object.

If you have followed my somewhat rambling remarks and have done any reading in linguistics, these characteristics require no further explanation. But I wish to add three which are not definitive, as Professor Hill's are, but descriptive. That is, a given corpus may be a language without the characteristics I shall mention, but if it is a language, these apply.

The first of these is the observation that languages change. This fact is so obvious that there is no need to belabor the point. However, some people more or less automatically equate change with corruption and corruption with deterioration. They apparently don't realize the implications of this view. Would anyone seriously suggest that the language of Proust or of Camus is a degenerate offspring of the language of Cicero or of Seneca? An offspring, yes; but degenerate, no. Is there any correlation between the effectiveness of English as a literary medium and the quality of the literature produced at any particular time in its history? It is interesting, to say the least, that both Chaucer and Shakespeare followed a time when great numbers of new words were being acquired.

My second descriptive characteristic is that every language exists as a kind of generality having its actualization in specific manifestations or instances. This statement is an extension from a point made earlier, when I said that language is a kind of human activity which can exist only by means of specific languages. To use an analogy, one does not play sports; one plays games. If he engages in sports, he does so only by engaging in one or more of the specific activities included under that label, such as fishing, golf, or basketball. In the same sense, one can engage in linguistic activity only by using French, English, Navaho, or some other existing linguistic system. To carry this one step further, French, English, Navaho, and other existing linguistic systems are themselves generalities manifested in instances. The distinction between system and manifestation has two corollaries or applications which are pertinent to our duties. In the case of a language like English, what we teach is not the English language, but a variety of English. The English language is a kind of synthesis of common denominators within its current varieties which makes these varieties mutually intelligible. Whenever we communicate with English, we actually employ one of these varieties, but phonological distinctions and grammatical meanings ultimately derive from the total system to which this variety belongs.

This is a rather delicate point which I need to illustrate. I referred a while back to the binary nature of the English verb system. If the main verb is a single word, it must be either simple present in form or simple past. If a person uses a form like *done,* for *did,* or *seen* for *saw,* he is nevertheless understood perfectly. And he is not omitting a *have*. Someone who says "I seen him when he done it" does not mean "I have seen him when he has done it"; he is simply using the past tense forms which are customary in his dialect. Another illustration is the distinction between *who* and *whom.* This distinction appears to be quite unnecessary to the expression of primary meaning. The uses of *who* and *whom* are congruent with those of the single word *which,* and the lack of separate nominative and objective forms for *which* seems to cause no difficulty.

I hope you don't think that I am advocating *seen* for *saw,* or *who* for *whom.* Language communicates meanings in addition to primary meanings, and such details of usage as these have a function in conveying these additional meanings. But differences in grammar between one variety of English and another are seldom factors in exactness and precision on the strictly denotational level, however important they are in other respects. This brings me to the other corollary of the statement about system and manifestation—the fact that we must choose a variety, or a range of varieties—as our subject matter for instruction. But I wish to defer this problem until our meeting this evening.

My third descriptive characteristic is that any language can be written. The importance of this, for us, lies in the fact that communication through writing tends to develop a related but somewhat different tradition from that for speech. As I wrote out this material, I prepared it for oral delivery. Had it been prepared for publication, some of the sentences would have been put together differently. Our subject is set up so as to emphasize communication through writing rather than through speech. We are therefore primarily concerned with visual English rather than with oral English. For our purposes, the most useful description of English grammar is one that is based on the words and constructions which appear in written communication.

However, the only way this can be complete, as a description of English, is to consider these words and constructions as they are, or would be, spoken. For one reason, our students know at least one variety of spoken English and our problem is to teach them how to use this knowledge in reading and writing, and for another, some of the grammatical signals are phonological—they are distinctions in sound other than those which differentiate vowels and consonants. Since the means of indicating these in writing are quite subtle, we should make our students aware of these aspects of the system so that they will not write sentences that would be ambiguous in oral interpretation. For example, I once saw a road sign which said "All night parking prohibited." Whoever wrote that sign was not aware of the trap in this particular sequence of words. Students also need to be aware of intonation so that they will be able to control rhythm better and so that they will be able to punctuate more effectively.

Language
Theory

THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF LANGUAGE

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In his excellent glossary of linguistic terminology, Mr. Weiss has referred to linguistics as "This mysterious science." What I should like to do in this introductory lecture is to dispel a little of the mystery. Too often linguistics suffers from seeming to appear involved and technical, when really it is little more than organized common sense.

Since, as meetings of this kind go, we are a fairly small and informal group, it will be most helpful, I believe, if I deal simply and informally with certain features of language as they are viewed by the linguist and try to explain why he looks at them as he does. I shall try, particularly, to select for treatment those particular aspects of language which will come up for discussion during the course of this institute.

In fact, it is difficult to avoid being selective. The topic of this morning's task is broad enough for a book as comprehensive as Bloomfield's *Language* or for a year's course at an upper class or graduate level. It would be all too easy to try to cover far too much territory. Consequently I shall limit myself to a fairly detailed presentation of three or four ways in which the linguist looks at language, in each instance attempting to indicate the primary unit or units that he recognizes, to suggest how he isolates them and in particular how he sees them as fitting into a pattern or organization.

We may best begin with a frequently quoted definition of language as "a system of patterned vocal behavior by means of which men cooperate in society." Notice that the words *system* and *pattern* both occur, that the behavior is vocal, that the linguist is interested in language as behavior, and that the linguist's approach to behavior is in terms of what it does, the role it plays. Linguists usually no longer define language as a medium of communication by means of which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are expressed. The current approach is essentially behavioristic. Please keep this definition in mind as I select three or four aspects of it and try to explain why the linguist looks at language in this way and how he proceeds to study it.

Language and Sound

First of all, language has sound. Remember that our definition specified "patterned *vocal* behavior." Moreover, Mr. Weiss's glossary mentioned structural linguistics as being based upon "the primacy of speech." Unfortunately linguists have not been successful in explaining why and to what degree we are interested in the spoken language, what we mean by *primacy* in connection with the spoken language, and where the written language comes into our purview.

For one thing, *primacy* means simply examining and analyzing the spoken language first. Not infrequently reduction to writing obscures some of the neatly patterned features of the spoken language, that is to say of the language itself. We may take the inflection for plurality as an illustration.

From the point of view of pronunciation we have three variations of the inflection for regular noun plurals. After voiceless consonants such as *p, t, k,* and *f* we pronounce an *s: caps, cats, books, cuffs.* After voiced sounds, which would include *b, d, g, v,* or any vowel, we pronounce a *z: cabs, loads, dogs, leaves, tees.* After any one of six sibilant sounds, represented by the series *caress, fez, mesh, garage, etch, edge,* we pronounce a neutral vowel followed by *z,* [ə z]. One can scarcely fail to see the patterning here. The voiceless inflection is added to a voiceless consonant, the voiced inflection to a voiced sound, and in the case of sounds which are phonetically similar to the inflection itself, the latter is protected by means of the insertion of a vowel. The identical distribution prevails in the genitive singular inflection of nouns and the third person singular, present indicative of verbs. A pattern of similar distribution is used with the past tense and past participle forms of regular verbs *(looked, lugged, waited, waded),* in which the written inflection *-ed* has three values in pronunciation: [-t, -d, -əd].

The Relationship between Speech and Writing

There are times when the writing system does more than merely obscure the patterning of the spoken language; it does not record it at all. The definite article is a case in point. The indefinite article has one form (*a*) when it precedes consonants, another when it precedes vowels, (*an*). This is clearly reflected in our spelling system. But from the point of view of pronunciation, the invariably spelled *the* has precisely the same distribution in most parts of the country: [ðə] before consonants, [ðɨ] before vowels. Compare *the book* with *the apple.*

Our writing system is particularly inept at revealing the patterning of such features of language as stress and intonation. Again a single example will suffice. Let us suppose that I have said to someone, "I'm going downtown." His response is a word which can be spelled in only one way: "*Where?*" Yet this ambiguous spelling fails to reveal the most important fact about the word, namely the choice of intonation pattern. If the word is pronounced with a downward intonation turn (Wh\ere?), I will interpret it as a request for further information, and my reply will specify a particular place or places—the bank, the post office, the public library. But if there is an upward intonation turn superimposed on the word (Wh/ere?), I will understand this as a request for repetition and an indication that my original statement was either not heard or not understood.

Moreover, this distinctive use of the two intonation patterns applies not merely to *where,* but to *when, how, why, who, what,* in short to any of the interrogative words which can begin a sentence. It is a part of the system of the language, an instance of patterned vocal behavior. Yet, if we depended wholly upon written English to display the structure of the language, we would remain quite innocent of the existence of the particular pattern which has just been described. This is why anyone interested in language from a scientific point of view gives his attention first to the spoken form of it and seeks to describe its various patterns. After that he will turn to the writing system and deal with it in the same rigorous and systematic manner.

There are other considerations with respect to the general nature of language which also emphasize the primacy of the spoken over the written form. The first of these is the relative age of the two. Writing began approximately 6,000 years ago. Just how long man has been speaking is a mystery, but conservative estimates seem to indicate at least 500,000 years. Moreover, we must not overlook the fact that many of the 3,500 languages of the world have not been reduced to writing at all. This enables us to say that there are many spoken languages which are not written, but there are no written languages that are not spoken or have not been spoken at some time.

Furthermore, there is the matter of the relative amount of speaking and writing. It has been estimated that each one of us speaks about the equivalent of a small novel weekly. I seriously doubt, even in this highly literate age, that the writing one does even approaches this amount. Finally, if one considers the development of language within the individual, it is evident that every person has been speaking some four or five years before he is able either to read or to write. All of this simply serves to reinforce our earlier conclusion that we must make our initial analysis of the spoken language.

After that has been done, it is most important that we turn to the written language and describe it in the same rigorous and objective fashion. Among other things, we should be able to determine from a comparison of the two precisely those adjustments the written language must make to compensate both for what it does not adequately record, particularly stress and intonation, and for what it cannot conveniently record: hesitation pauses, false starts, change of direction.

I am certain we would all agree that a stenographic record of ordinary speech is not at all an effective instrument of communication in writing. There has been no better illustration of this than the recent tendency on the part of certain newspapers to give verbatim reports of presidential press conferences. As we read these we can all see what happens when the actual running speech is taken down just as it comes from the mouth of the speaker while he is still thinking, still formulating his answers. Moreover, it really makes very little difference who is president; the incoherence, the anacolutha are fairly standard.

The Phoneme

In dealing with the spoken language, the linguist's first responsibility is to break up the continuum of sound into discrete units. The unit which he recognizes is the phoneme. I mention this with some hesitation because a member of the audience with whom I was speaking only a little while ago complained that at conferences of this sort and with speakers like myself, one rarely got beyond the phoneme. I trust that I shall not bog down at this point. Having recognized its existence, as the smallest significant or meaningful unit of language, we need merely to indicate how it is isolated or identified.

The technique of minimal pairing is normally employed in making a phonemic inventory of a language. If, in English, we take two such sequences of sounds as *pet* and *pat*, identical in every feature but one, and if we decide that the two sequences constitute different words, we then conclude that /e/ and /æ/ are different phonemes. This seems obvious enough, yet we must recognize that not all occurrences of the /æ/ phoneme are identical. The vowel of *pat* differs markedly in duration from the vowel of *pad;* the vowel of *can* may be nasalized or have a nasalized off-glide. Moreover, two sounds may belong to the same phoneme yet not be identical in manner of production. Thus, the *p* in *pin* is pronounced with considerable aspiration accompanying the plosion, and the *p* in *cup* need not be exploded at all. The phonemic inventory varies considerably from language to language, constituting one of the major difficulties in foreign-language teaching. A native speaker of Spanish may pronounce *eso* with the vowel of *bet* or with the vowel of *bait*. It will still be the same word. But *met* and *mate* are not the same word in English, nor are *fool* and *full*. These last two vowels are also members of the same phoneme in Spanish.

Once the phonemes in a language have been identified, we are again able to see something of a pattern in them from the point of view of mode of articulation. For example, the nine simple vowels of English, according to the system described by Mr. Weiss, fall neatly into a three by three pattern: three degrees of height, three degrees of tongue position, with the back vowels further characterized by lip-rounding and the front and central series produced with the lips spread. Many of our consonants occur in matched voiced and voiceless pairs. The stops and the nasals are characterized by the same three points of articulation: bilabial, alveolar, and velar. The clustering or combination of sounds lends itself to the same type of orderly description. Obviously all of this is inherent in speech rather than writing, lending further support to the concept of the primacy of speech.

Forms: The Morpheme

In addition to having sound, language has form. We speak of the description and analysis of the forms of language as morphemics. Let me digress here just long enough to point out that the terminology of current linguistics depends to a considerable extent upon one prefix and one suffix. The suffix is *-eme*; the prefix is *allo-*. They were mentioned briefly in connection with the sounds of language. The suffix *-eme* is used to identify a significant unit that can be isolated by means of some consistent process. It can be applied to any of the various aspects of language: *phoneme*, a significant unit of sound; *morpheme*, a significant unit of form; *tagmeme*, a significant syntactical unit or possibly unit of order; *sememe*, a unit of meaning; *grapheme*, a unit of the writing system. One could go beyond this and create other terms on the same pattern if he desired. The prefix *allo-* is just as widely applied to nonsignificant variants of each of the units. At the time of Shakespeare, for example, the characters *u* and *v* were allographs of a single grapheme.

If you have a firm concept of the linguist's intent in his use of the *-eme* suffix and the *allo-* prefix, linguistics will be that much less mysterious to you, because this terminology is very handily employed. At one time I became concerned over the terminological problem in linguistics and went to some pains to compare the experiences of linguists with those of scientists in other disciplines. I learned, in the course of my looking about, that virtually all new sciences and those which are striking out in new directions have their terminological problems. This is especially true when the terminology is to be couched in the English language. Of all the languages of Western Europe, only English has a learned sector of its vocabulary, primarily Greek and Latin based, so definitely divorced from its everyday word stock, that self-definition or easy characterization in a scientific term is virtually impossible. I discovered also that people in some of the other sciences, particularly psychology, felt that we had handled our scientific vocabulary rather well.

Morphemics has already been defined as the concern with form. The minimal formal unit is the morpheme. The glossary you have distinguishes for you between free and bound morphemes in a manner adequate for our purposes. The English language, by virtue of its very structure, does pose certain difficulties in isolating morphemes. For one thing, over the centuries we have come to depend more and more upon function words to indicate relationships which were formerly signalled by inflections.

The English genitive is a particularly good illustration of this. Originally all genitive relationships were marked by an inflectional ending. We still use the genitive inflection for certain kinds of relationships. We say *John's book, horse's tail, a day's work, St. Luke's Hospital.* Notice, incidentally, that by no means all of these show possession. There are certain other types of expressions which used to employ the inflected genitive but which no longer do so. The partitive type of construction as in *a glass of water* or *three of them* cannot be expressed by means of an inflection. Nor can *crown of thorns,* which also used to have the form *thorns' crown.* But just as there are some kinds of constructions which demand, without exception, the function word *of,* so there are others in which the inflection is equally invariable—we cannot say *world's fair* in any other way. Moreover, some constructions like *horse's tail* or *tail of the horse* permit the use of either the inflectional suffix or the function word *of.* Naturally, an adequate description of the language will have to deal competently and accurately with these problems of distribution.

Because of the rather peculiar stage in which the English language finds itself at the present time, arrested between a small number of widely applied inflectional patterns and what is, in all probability, a progressively greater use of function words, we do have difficulties. Auxiliary verbs are exercising modal, aspectual, and even temporal functions. Prepositions are doing the work formerly performed by case endings. Only a minority of our adjectives indicate degree by means of the inflections *-er* and *-est*. This is one aspect of our concern with form.

One cannot, however, limit his observation of form to inflectional suffixes. The process of word formation or word derivation also enters into the picture. For example, an observation of such combinations as *blackness, kindness, softness, laziness,* suggests to us that *-ness* may be added to an adjective to form an abstract noun denoting a condition or quality of. Thus *-ness* is a bound morpheme just as the inflection for plurality or that used to indicate past time. So is the ending *-er* which converts verbs into agentive nouns: *baker, singer, writer, rider.*

We recognize morphemes not so much through the technique of minimal pairing, as we did the phonemes, but rather in terms of what the linguist calls recurrent sames. How this might operate has already been suggested in connection with the suffix *-ness*. Its recurrence with a large number of adjective stems, coupled with a modification of meaning and grammatical function that is just about the same in every instance, isolates or identifies it as a bound morpheme. Likewise, a series such as *propose, protect, project, progress* serves to establish the existence of *pro-* as a morpheme. Someone has aptly called morphemes the building blocks of language.

The process is not always this simple, however. Difficulties will arise with a noun such as *calf*. According to the regular pattern of plural formation, as it is seen to operate with words like *cuff, muff, whiff,* and *skiff,* the plural ought to be *calfs,* adding the voiceless inflection to a stem ending in a voiceless consonant. But the plural is *calves,* with *-es* pronounced as [z]. Therefore it becomes necessary to recognize *calv-* as an allomorph of *calf,* in order that we may account for the addition of the voiced inflection in the plural. In a sense this is not too different from the conventional rule for plurality for such nouns as *calf, knife, wife,* and others, in that the results are the same, but actually it has two advantages. In the first place, it enables us to operate with our concept of the morpheme; moreover, it provides a mechanism for taking care of such forms as *wreath, mouth,* and *house* where there is also a voicing of the final consonant of the morpheme, but where the phenomenon is concealed by the spelling.

I should like also to call your attention to the convenient concept of the zero allomorph, which likewise adds neatness to our description of the language. We may observe, for example, that the noun *sheep* adds an inflection to form the genitive singular and also to form the genitive plural. But the common case of the plural is identical with the singular. Since, except for this one ending, there is a full panoply of forms, and since most nouns do add an inflectional ending here, we say that *sheep* in this instance takes a zero allomorph. We would account for the past tense of *put* and indeed the third person singular present subjunctive of verbs in the same way. Thus the concept of zero, that is to say adding nothing as a deviation from the normal practice, is a convenient way of stating a fact and at the same time adhering to the concept of pattern.

Syntax

The third feature of language to which the linguist gives his attention is order, the ordering or arrangement of morphemes. We often speak of this as syntax, a word which can be understood in terms of its etymology. The word is from the Greek. The prefix *syn-* means "together." The second part of the word comes from the verb *tassein*, "to arrange." Thus, syntax is primarily a study of the way in which parts of an utterance are put together, the order which they follow. This is of particular importance for the student of English because in our language so much that used to be signalled inflectionally now depends upon word order. The contrast between a statement and a question boils down in essence to the relative order of subject and verb. In a sentence like *John kicked James*, we immediately interpret the kicker and the kickee in terms of the position of the nouns with respect to the verb. In the sequence an *awful pretty dress* as compared with *a pretty awful dress*, we again identify intensifier and adjective in terms of a fixed order.

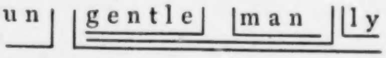
It must be confessed, however, that this is not always as simple as it may seem; some orders in English are rigidly fixed whereas others permit a certain amount of variation. Among the adverbs in English there are certain words, such as *seldom, often, never, rarely*, whose principal function is to indicate frequency. Notice that it is quite possible to say either *He often comes here* or *He comes here often*. It is much easier to vary the position of *often* than it would be to vary the position of *never*.

Thus, one of our problems is to distinguish between word order patterns which are obligatory and those which are permitted, and to separate these from those which cannot be employed.

We get into one basic difficulty in our treatments of English grammar which involves syntax to a degree. This arises from the circumstance that a part-of-speech classification based wholly upon formal considerations cannot be wholly reconciled with one based upon position in the sentence. Consequently, those who attempt to work with definitions of nouns, adjectives, and verbs which are based upon form find themselves forced to make a distinction between a *noun*, that is a word which satisfies the inflectional requirements of the category, and a *nominal*, a word which satisfies the functional or positional but not the inflectional requirements of the category. Consequently, in the works of such English language scholars as Henry Lee Smith, Jr., Archibald Hill, and James Sledd, you will find nouns and nominals, verbs and verbals, adjectives and adjectivals.

Immediate Constituents

A fourth way in which the linguist looks at language is in trying to understand the relative relationship of the elements of a construction to each other. This is generally referred to as immediate constituent analysis. It is probably most easily illustrated on the level of individual morphemes, although the principle would apply with equal facility to sentence parts. We may begin with the word *ungentlemanly*, recognizing that it consists of the morphemes *un-*, *gentle*, *man*, and *-ly*, respectively. There is no question that *gentleman* constitutes the core of the combination, and that the two morphemes which comprise it are more intimately related to each other than to the remaining two. The real question arises when we try to decide which of the two, *un-* or *-ly*, is most peripheral to the entire combination. Upon examination we can see that the whole combination actually must consist of *un-* + *gentlemanly;* it could not consist of *ungentleman* + *-ly* since *ungentleman* does not exist. Consequently the relationship of the parts might be diagrammed as follows:



Although, for the sake of simplicity, immediate constituent analysis has been illustrated on the level of the relationship of the component parts of a single word, the same problem arises in connection with virtually every sentence of a complexity beyond that of *Birds fly*. Witness the following: "He stands upon a platform of loose planks laid over needle beams and roped to a girder near the connection upon which the men are at work." Note that "upon a platform" has the most immediate connection with *stands,* that "of loose planks" is the major segment dependent upon *platform,* that *laid* and *roped* are in parallel construction referring to *planks,* and so on. Presumably this feature of the syntax of English is vital to the sensitivity and pliability of the language as a medium of communication, and hopefully, an awareness of this on the part of student and teacher may lead to more effective command of language.

Generative Grammar

One of the very promising recent developments in the study of grammar is what is now often referred to as generative or transformation grammar. There is insufficient time to do anything more than say a few words about it by way of introduction; nevertheless I believe that we must disabuse ourselves of the notion that the two terms are anything like synonymous. The term *generative* is concerned primarily with the purpose of grammatical study, which according to its adherents is to formulate a grammar of a language in such a fashion that it will generate all of the grammatical sentences of a language and none of the ungrammatical ones. Actually, I am inclined to doubt that generative grammar and descriptive grammar are necessarily mutually exclusive terms. Certainly many of the descriptivists assumed that their grammars would serve as a guide to those who wanted to produce sentences in the language. The formulation of generative statements assumes a descriptive study. The difference seems to me to be one of emphasis rather than kind.

When we speak of transformation, however, we are dealing with a statement about technique rather than purpose. It is one of the modes of operation of the generative grammarians. The language is conceived of as consisting of a number of kernel sentences; by employing a number of transformations, such as the change from active voice to passive, or a number of successive transformations, a large number of sentence, clause, and phrase patterns may be generated. Transformations have proved to be extremely useful in clearing up structural or syntactic ambiguities and in providing another way of dealing with syntactical relationships.

The Linguistic Method

Let me conclude by referring briefly to the way in which the linguist studies languages and his attitude toward his material. We must understand that all language study employs a sampling technique. Almost never has anyone been able to examine the totality of a language. When this has occurred, as in the case of the fragments of Minoan Greek or Tocharian, or a living language with only two remaining speakers as was true of Chitemacha, what is left is in itself a fragment or accidental sample.

Since the linguist is committed to a sample, he is concerned that it be representative and authentic. Authenticity means studying the language as it actually exists, not someone's opinion about it or what it ought to be. A representative sample is one which does not place unreal emphasis upon certain features to the exclusion of others. In short, the linguist selects his materials just as any other scholar would. He examines them quite as systematically as any science would demand. His classifications are established and his conclusions are drawn with the rigor which would be a norm for any logical operation. If we will keep in mind these means and ends, and in addition make allowance for the fact that the material with which the linguist deals serves also as the cloak for our thoughts, linguistics will seem that much less the mysterious science.

Language
Theory

LANGUAGE—ITS NATURE AND USE

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My topic is "Language—Its Nature and Use." That certainly is broad enough to allow room to move around in. But I cannot complain, since I chose it myself. What I had in mind was that at the beginning, it would be well to have a broad, overall view of this subject.

Language is not a new subject to teachers of English; you have been closely concerned with it throughout your professional careers. But you have been chiefly, if not wholly preoccupied with concern about language as a vehicle, a means to an end, a medium. You have tried to teach your pupils to write correctly and expressively, to read with speed and comprehension, to understand and appreciate the artistic use of language in literature. Insofar as you taught them anything about language itself—especially grammar and vocabulary—you did so with the quite proper intent of increasing their skill in using language. This is, of course, the proper business of an English teacher. But there has been growing up recently a feeling that there are many things about language which are worth knowing for themselves; they have their own intrinsic value. We can thus say quite properly that an institute on language itself—its nature and use—has two aims. The first is to bring to your attention some recent thinking and discovery about language that can help you in your major task. The second is to show that there is intrinsic interest in the study of language as an end in itself, and that both the teacher and the pupil can deepen their understanding of man's nature and behavior by studying his greatest invention. We have, then, both practical and humanistic aims.

I am going to reverse the order of my title and discuss the use of language before I come to its nature. Or rather, I should say its uses, because there are several. I shall deal with the five which I believe are the most important. They are: to communicate, to express, to socialize, to control, and to think.

First, then, to *communicate*. This is the most obvious use of language, and to the person who does not stop to think, perhaps the only important one. Certainly if you ask the man in the street what language is for, his immediate response will be "to communicate facts and ideas." Most of our work with students, both in composition and in literature, is focused on this use of language. We want them to be able to put their ideas into language—spoken or written—which makes these ideas available to others with a maximum of accuracy and a minimum of effort. Likewise we want them to be able to grasp the full meaning of the messages which others send to them, including messages as complicated and profound as *Hamlet* or *Moby Dick*. In both of these matters we may indeed have aesthetic motives as well—we would like their own writing to be graceful as well as clear, and we would like them to see that the greatness of a *Hamlet* or a *Moby Dick* comes not only from the message it communicates but also from the richness and beauty of its language. But our primary concern is with communication. If we are worth our salt as English teachers, we will condemn the theme whose flowing and flowery language conceals an almost total lack of message, and we will try to correct the emotional fuzzy-mindedness that finds poetry "beautiful" but can't tell you in any satisfactory way what any specific poem is about.

In our quite proper concern about communication, however, we must not overlook or forget the other uses of language. Take *expression,* for example. By this I mean the human habit of finding release from tensions or reacting to emergencies by using language. This may occur on all levels, from the ludicrous to the sublime. If you come home at night and while groping for the light switch bark your shin on a chair which someone has put in an unfamiliar place, you usually say something—perhaps aloud, perhaps, as we say, "under your breath." What you say depends both on the violence of the shock and on your own vocabulary and early training and experience. The experience does not have to be painful; it may be moving, satisfying, or awe-inspiring. I remember once watching and hearing a great flight of geese flying north in the springtime in a great straggling V, gabbling and honking as they went, and I found myself saying to myself, but aloud, "That is a wonder of the world." Not a very profound remark, but somehow it helped me to assimilate and cope with that experience.

A great deal of literature—especially lyric poetry—is primarily expression. Gerard Manley Hopkins' great sonnet "The Windhover" strikes us as an infinitely more complicated and developed counterpart of my response to the geese. The sight of the perfect skill and control of the flying hawk stirred feelings in him which called for an equally skilled and controlled expression in language. If we treat such a poem as merely an attempt to communicate a message about the hawk or the poet, we misconceive its inspiration and its purpose.

The third use of language is to *socialize*. By this I mean that many aspects of the complicated network of human relations that we call society call for language as an accompaniment or sometimes as an essential ingredient. This use of language, like the others we have already discussed, also covers a wide range. At one end of the scale we might put casual greetings like "good morning" and "good bye" or talking about the weather, or inquiring after someone's health. Normally there is no intent to convey any message or express any particular feelings in this kind of language. Instead, there is a general intent to identify ourselves and the people we greet as cooperating members of a society that depends for its success on mutual recognition of good will. Certainly when we ask "How are you?" we don't expect a recital of symptoms and would be bored or exasperated if we got one. In fact, it is the absence of this kind of language that conveys a message—"The boss must be in a bad temper; he never even said 'Good morning'"; or "She went away without even saying 'Good-bye'."

At the other end of the scale, a good deal of ceremonial and ritualistic language is also a form of socializing. The great crises and turning points of life are marked by special linguistic accompaniment. No matter what their intent, nor what they may have done, signed, paid, or said to one another, we do not feel that two people are properly married until some authoritative person has said before witnesses "I pronounce you man and wife." Christenings, funerals, inaugurals, commencements, coronations—all use language, most or all of which is fixed and familiar to all concerned, as a part of the machinery of keeping the social wheels greased and turning.

The fourth use of language, which I have called *control,* is somewhat related to the last, especially in its more primitive aspects. There is a widespread belief among less civilized peoples that proper use of language may be effective in controlling the physical universe and the god or gods that made it and influence it. Everyone knows the story of Ali Baba, and the magic words "Open sesame" that caused the stone doors of the cave to open. Folk literature is full of similar stories in which knowledge and use of the proper language gave great power over physical objects. Another widespread belief is that knowing the name of an object, a person, or a god somehow gives you power or influence with that object, person, or god. For this reason the gods—including the Old Testament Jehovah—often concealed their "real names" from all but their most trusted priests. Much of ritual, including charms, prayers, and incantations, consists of language which is thought to extend man's control into areas where his relatively puny physical strength cannot help him.

You may say that this superstitious attitude toward language is no longer characteristic of highly civilized cultures like our own. On the whole you would be right, though traces of it are still with us. We still feel that the thing we can name is somehow tamer—more under control—than the unnamed. And we still sometimes act as though we believed that talking about some physical phenomenon like the weather may influence it. But in general we use language more in our efforts to control other people—where we know that it will indeed be effective. This kind of control may be of many different sorts. As teachers, we use language not only to communicate with our students, but to control them as well. Preachers and politicians, advertisers and salesmen, confidence men and psychiatrists—all are concerned in using language to control the behavior of others. Their success may sometimes be spectacular, as was illustrated in World War II by both Churchill and Hitler.

The last of the important uses of language may be the most important of all—we use it to *think* with. As William James long ago pointed out, the outside world to the baby is a "great blooming, buzzing confusion." If it is to be dealt with at all, it must somehow be given organization. One—not the only one, of course—of the devices we use for this is language. Language permits us to build into our thought such indispensable techniques as generalization, abstraction, and analogy. It gives us a medium in which we can form concepts and remember them for future use.

A good deal of thinking, of course, may take place without language. A painter may think in terms of line and color, an architect in terms of space and spatial relations, a composer in terms of musical relations. But most of our ordinary thinking, as well as very high level thinking in areas like theology, philosophy, and literary criticism, uses language as its essential medium.

One consequence of this, as has been frequently pointed out, is that our thinking is controlled to a considerable degree by the qualities and categories of our native language. Take a relatively simple point—what grammarians call *number*. In English, whenever we use a noun, we must decide whether it is to be singular or plural, because our grammar works that way. Even though the number of objects may be irrelevant to the thought of the moment, we still have to make the decision as to whether to use *book* or *books, man* or *men, dog* or *dogs.* This makes it hard to talk or even think about *dog* without regard to number. Even those nouns that don't have an overt plural marker like *sheep* must be marked by the context: either we think about *sheep* or *a sheep.*

We do find ways around these obstacles. After all, with sufficient skill and ingenuity an idea expressed in one language may be translated into another with a different set of categories and grammatical devices. But it still remains that our language, an indispensable medium for much of our thought, exerts a subtle and usually unperceived influence on it. Our language permits and encourages questions like "What is democracy?" but finds ungrammatical questions like "What are and do democracies?" which might be both more legitimate and easier to answer.

Two things may help to illustrate this close relationship between language and thought. Every teacher has had the experience of having his thoughts on some subject or other clarified by the necessity of teaching it to somebody else. The mere act of overtly verbalizing what we vaguely perceived helps us get a firmer grasp on the thought. The language in which we put it becomes an essential part of the thought.

Likewise, as teachers we have all had students tell us "I know what I wanted to say, but I couldn't put it into words." The truth of the matter usually is that they *didn't* really know what they wanted to say. They had some half-formed ideas and they lacked either the patience or the language to put them into shape. Conversely, we have all been faced by the well-intentioned *C–* student who wants to, as he puts it, "improve his writing." When we take a sample and try to show him, we discover that he is already using language as well as his thinking permits. He simply cannot see much difference between his loose, disconnected, fuzzy writing and a tightened up version of it, because his very thought is loose, disconnected, and fuzzy.

These, then, are the five principal uses of language. Usually, of course, more than one of them is involved in a given utterance. When I say "Isn't it a beautiful day" to a friend, I am both expressing and socializing. The poet who publishes his poetry thereby indicates that he wishes to communicate as well as to express. But it certainly is of prime importance in the teaching of composition to lead students to ask themselves which of these purposes is primary in a given piece of writing.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The remainder of the talk dealt with the nature of language. Since it was taken directly from a manuscript which is to be published elsewhere, it cannot be printed here. In general, the points made were that language is arbitrary, conventional, culturally transmitted (i.e., it must be learned), and marked by a complex multi-level structure. These qualities are true of all languages, and knowledge of their implications and consequences is important for the English teacher. See also W. Nelson Francis, *The Structure of American English* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1958).

Language
Theory

LINGUISTIC CRITICISM AND LITERATURE IN FOUR CENTURIES

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The approaches to language and literature are many. How are teachers to know which to select as most significant to student readers and writers of the latter twentieth century? I suggest that the theories of language which our current leaders in linguistics express can be most significant because they reflect in explicit forms the imagery-concept structure distinctive of our times whereas previous language theories, derivative of earlier times, are less immediately useful. I say imagery-concept structure because terms like time, action, space are both image and concept. And it is the particular image-concept referents to time, action, and space which help to distinguish cultural communities one from another—in the world or in history.

A review of linguistic criticism and literature in several historic periods can give us an understanding of the image-concept structures common to all periods as well as those distinctive of particular periods. This essay, therefore, will try out in the contexts of the last four centuries the theory that linguistic criticism and literature are related and that together they reflect some of the changing concepts and imagery underlying the general use of language these last four centuries.

Relating linguistic criticism to literature is a comparative study in which English scholarship shows a cultural lag. It is an area that needs exploring. Most literate readers know the major authors and literary critics for the last four hundred years—from Shakespeare on—but not so many know the characteristics of the English language and the major language scholars during these centuries. Yet many observations on the uses of language and some reasons for these uses are to be gained from these language scholars. We find that the way linguists of a period regard language is quite often like the way writers of a period regard language. The degree of comparability can be anywhere from somewhat to "mostwhat," as an Elizabethan might say. Insofar as they put into verbal form ideas relevant to producing literate writing, linguists may have some influence on writers. The linguistic critic like the literary critic, no doubt, determines in some degree the course writing takes in his generation. Readers of literature as well as the writers, themselves, therefore, can find linguists' statements about language suggestive. Part of understanding an author's work may rest on understanding the language concepts which control his use of language. Even in a complex society of disparate specialists as ours is, the linguist is likely to be related closely to the writer and to be interpreting in explicit ways the language theory and practices of writers. Some of the particular language concepts characteristic of each of the last four centuries which linguists and writers share and which are helpful to the reader in coming to a full comprehension of the written works of a period will be the subject matter of this essay. Such concept-images as time, motion, substantiveness, space will be among those discussed.

The seventeenth century stood at the end of a great oral tradition, as we stand at the beginning of another. The writers of the time were conscious, therefore, of the melodies and rhythms of their language as they spoke it in a way which the writers of the print-centered eighteenth century were not. Campion, for example, wrote poetry as if it were music. Some sought to incorporate these melodies and rhythms of speech, their physical voices, into their writing. As Francis Berry points out in *Poetry and the Physical Voice,* Milton wrote into "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," the lighter, tenor voice of his youth and into *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* the resonant bass notes of his later speech. With Le Roi de Soleil at his zenith just across the channel and the English court speaking French for part of the century, writers were responsive to the riches of French culture and took into English a copious supply of words from French and from Latin through French. Borrowing from Latin came easily to them because it held a central position in university and school education and because the intellectuals dreamed that it could be the world's lingua franca for the cultured and the scholarly. Latin words, therefore, slipped like familiar friends into the language of many writers. Milton, as a young man, wrote poetry in Latin and English and later created a Latinate English for the grand style of the works of his maturity.

The grammarians of the seventeenth century reflect the consciousness of the oral language and the word-making eagerness of contemporary writers. John Wallis stressed sound and word-formation in his *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* (1653). He analyzed the phonemic system of English, using in his analysis a concept of allophones. He also pointed out that sound adds lexical meaning to a word if the word belongs to a set of words sharing in part the same sound and the same lexical meaning. For example, *sn* has two meanings. The predominant one is *nosey* because *sn* is the initial consonant cluster in a large set of words of the *sniff, sneeze, sneer* type. The lesser meaning is *underhanded* because *sn* gets echoic meaning also from another set of words which includes *snake* and *sneak*. In his section on word-formation, he lists with examples, many of them Latin-derived, such devices as blending, clipping, affixing, onomatopoeia.

Not only the sounds of language were considered and the ranking ethnic sources of the time drawn upon by grammarians and writers in their respective works but the sense of swift flowing dimensions in time were stressed by both. The simultaneity of different types of action was expressed by Milton in *Lycidas*. When Lycidas is received in Heaven, the angels sing, and singing move in glory—a duality of action in limitless time and simultaneity. In the midst of these open-ended streams of action, the angels stoop to finiteness in wiping the tears forever from Lycidas' eyes. The streamsong of motion is broken by the staccato note of this finite action, all in infinite time. Milton described the angels as:

> solemn troops and sweet societies
> That sing, and singing in their glory move,
> And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.

In *Lycidas, Paradise Lost,* and elsewhere, Milton wrote with the image-concept that motion upward was toward Heaven, sublimity, and spiritual dignity, and motion downward, the reverse. However, horizontal motion, as in this passage, was neither good nor bad. But for John Wallis, the grammarian, motion was mainly horizontal and was associated with disintegrating forms. In his chapter on the history of the language at the beginning of the *Grammatica,* Wallis associated motion with an inevitable rush to nothingness. Motion was always a running-away type of activity as if all creation were caught in a massive horizontal hourglass, inevitably moving to an increasingly diminishing finale. Donne, we remember, kept a skull on his desk as a reminder of this image-concept of change. With such imagery, optimism easily took the form of a dream of a golden age in the past, and we find the eighteenth century drinking "deep of the Pierian springs" of the classics.

Another one of the underlying images of the seventeenth century was substantiveness. A historic formulation of the image is to be found in *Paradise Lost* where amorphousness was the "nothingness" or no-thingness-stuff that Satan cruised through on his way from Hades to Earth. Thingness was to be taken as the opposite of amorphousness or no-thingness. A noun was said to be a thing; that is, a noun represented whatever man had separated out from the chaos of no-thingness and made into thingness. The word "thing" in the context of seventeenth century concepts had a more definite meaning than it does for us. The definition of noun as "the name of a person, place, or thing" makes more sense, therefore, when it is understood in relation to the seventeenth century context in which it originated. In seventeenth century theory a "thing" remained unanchored to finite time and earth until it was joined by a verb, to "assert" or "affirm" it. The common definition for a verb in seventeenth and early eighteenth century grammars was that "a verb is a word that asserts or affirms." The meaning of "assert" or "affirm" was to make real in an earth-time context what would otherwise have been mere substantiveness in a perpetual state of free-fall abstraction. This meaning of "assert" Milton used in the invocation of *Paradise Lost* when he prayed that he might "assert" the eternal Providence of God, that is, make God's Providence an earth-time reality for the reader. According to this conceptual formulation the two, nouns and verbs together, complemented or, "completed" each other. Together they made "complete sense," therefore, or expressed a "complete thought." To say that a noun-verb sequence expressed "complete sense" or a "complete thought" made sense to the early grammarians, as it does not to us, because they had different imagery running correlative to what completeness meant and to what the meaning of a noun qua noun was to the meaning of a verb qua verb.

Substantiveness received much attention in seventeenth and early eighteenth century grammar and writing styles. It was the noun substantive which deistic minded grammarians considered the prime mover of a sentence: it started the sentence going, as God had started the world going. Writers packed their central meanings into nouns, and grammarians analyzed the language of the sentence so that nouns were central and the other parts of speech were secondary dependencies. The terminology matched the imagery. The verb was "predicated" on the noun subject, and adjectives and adverbs were "attributives," later called "modifiers." The noun-centered sentence which started in the seventeenth and gained momentum in the eighteenth century is still with us as an established feature of the style of our expository prose. In lesser prose, the adjective, considered as an attributive or modifier, is still a major way of extending the meaning of a noun. In the preface to the English translation of *The Odyssey*, Kazantzakis suggests that adjectives are ways of indicating the relativity of the noun substantive and, accordingly, he uses a style gold-leafed with adjectives for his epic.

The various ways of segmenting substantiveness as into higher-lower, general-particular also have their imagery. Seventeenth century writers write as if creation, or total substantiveness, was ordered in levels from angels to men to animals to the inanimate. This was the "great chain of being." The concept also was expressed as if it were pyramid-shaped with the upper reaches rarefied, more select, all excellence at the pinnacle—a feudal, aristocratic image continued into modern times. Blending with and overlaying this image was an image of ranges or concentric circles in which the farthest out ripple is the "utmost." One of the 1611 translators of *Isaiah* used this extending circle image of substantiveness in Chapter 58, where he imaginatively coined "rereward" as an extension of all that "reward" meant and something greatly beyond. Not only the reward of righteousness going before them is the due of the worshipful in spirit but "the Glory of the Lord shall be (their) rereward." It is interesting to find Robert Frost using the repeated prefix to add the same meaning to a root word. The "Lone Striker" knew of a "love that wanted rerenewing." Here Frost imaginatively coined "rerenewing" to indicate a love extending greatly beyond anything it had been before.

In both these images of the uppermost and outmost extremes of substantiveness, the extremes are given quality connotations. Sometimes, however, the concept is that extremes exist in complementary equality, that abstraction is the expected counterpart of the particular. In this image, to use the analogy again of the stone and the pool, the encompassing ripples—even the outermost—are all part of the total realization of the original central splash. Eighteenth century authors press words to fit this conceptual grid. For example, Greenwood in an opening chapter of his 1711 grammar experimentally made *kinds* imply a broader classification than *sorts*. Similarly, at the end of the century, Jefferson in his "Essay on the Anglo-Saxon Language" made *language* an inclusive term for historic English with *tongue* the term for the sublanguage of contemporary English and *dialect* the term for the sublanguage, Anglo-Saxon. The first sentence of this essay is:

> The importance of the Anglo-Saxon *dialect* toward a perfect understanding of the English *language* seems not to have been duly estimated by those charged with the education of youth, and yet it is unquestionably the basis of our present *tongue*.

Modern writers also use language in this broad sense. An example of it is the *Webster's Third New International* definition of linguistics, which reads thus:

> Linguistics: The study of human speech including the units, nature, structure and modification of *language*, languages, or a language.

The word, *English,* is similarly used to mean the unity of all the far flung sorts of English spoken throughout the world. To indicate that it is the international kind of English he is speaking of, Philip Gove coined the term *general English* and used it in the Preface to *Webster's Third New International.* He coined this term, I believe, just as an eighteenth century writer might have, to indicate that *general English* is the expected counterpart of *particular Englishes,* particular Englishes in an international context being British, American, Australian, African, etc. Some of his reviewers misread the concept-image referent of this term, *general English,* deprecating it by equating it with two modern dimensions to substantiveness: the lowest common denominator (from mathematics), and the mean or average (from statistics). Both of these concepts have negative connotations when applied to humanistic matters.

The concept of the great "general" as the expected counterpart of the particular or particulars is one of the major assumptions formulated and put into various contexts in the eighteenth century. It was the encouraging assumption of Jefferson and others, for example, in formulating the founding statements of our government. They believed in the great generality of *mankind* uniting each man with every other in the political state—a mankind within which every individual man stands equal. Thus to read justly our modern use of "democracy" in connection with our country, we need to remember the concept-imagery with which Jefferson and the others wrote our founding documents. We can better understand the modern ecumenical movement if we associate with it the same concept-image referent of a superordinate unity possible to the many which we associate with our form of democracy. It is this eighteenth century concept that Dag Hammarskjöld reaffirmed when he wrote: "The greatest achievement of man is the dream of mankind."

Men of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thus continued and developed the concept of substantiveness extending it from a word theory to a sentence theory. Moreover, they established various ways of segmenting the substantive, formulating especially the concept of generalization as the counterpart of the particular or particulars.

Linguists of the eighteenth century not only continued what the seventeenth century had started but had some special views of their own on language. For example, in this first of our print-centered centuries, linguists made little attempt to analyze the grammar of oral language as had Wallis but wrote their grammars as if language were a soundless mechanism. They also limited their investigation of word-formation to only those devices which relate to sentence position. They wanted to know whether a word was a noun or a verb, not as had Wallis whether it had been formed by a clipping or a blend. They did, however, contribute greatly to language theory and study. One of their contributions was the image of the linearity of language and another the image of motion as a central fact or facet of reality rather than as an attribute of things substantive; that is, of the noun, as it had been earlier. Early in the eighteenth century the grammarians began to consider a sentence to be a left-right sequence centering in a verb. With this linear image in mind, they defined the subject pronoun as "in the leading state" and the object pronoun as "in the following state." In his 1762 grammar, *A Short Introduction to English Grammar,* Bishop Robert Lowth used this linear image as his analytical tool to discover twelve phrase patterns. Some of those that he noted are among our so-called "basic sentence patterns." A similar concept of linearity can be seen to be operating in style. Addison's and Johnson's words march along in soldierly files in a way Donne's and Milton's never did. The ideal of order and predictable word patterns, characteristic of eighteenth century style, is noted by Adam Smith in his Edinburgh lectures. In the first historic set of lectures on English literature, Adam Smith said that a writer should not be forced to "hunt backwards and forwards" to find the meaning of a passage. Swift he especially commended for a style "so plain that one partly asleep may carry the sense along with him. . . . Nay, if we happen to lose a word or two, the rest of the sentence is so naturally connected with it, as that it comes into our mind of its own accord."

As the image of motion becomes a central image in the thought of the time, grammarians begin to define verbs as words of "doing, acting, suffering." Verbs become a mode of reality, not a mode of the substantiveness of the noun subject. Actions represented in style tend to be less variously simultaneous and more step by step progressions. In the eighteenth century, the motion lines seem to slope upward from left to right. The frequent recurrence in eighteenth century writing of this image gives a basis for the acceptance of *The Origin of Species* in 1859. The connotation becomes established, then, that upward is better, left to right is better; the villain, therefore, comes in from the right on the stage or TV screen. It is in refutation of this image, no longer so useful for us in the twentieth century, that e. e. cummings wrote of the new moon as:

> "more and perfectly more most ethereal."

In this image, he suggests that each phase has its excellence, that the less to the more in the case of the moon and in other things, too, is irrelevant to perfect-ness.

The nineteenth century established in the arts a Beethoven, as the eighteenth century had produced a Mozart. Goethe, Browning, George Eliot present in literature a new kind of complexity associated with the density of cosmic heights and chthonic depths. The imagery of the period indicates that complexity or density is the ultimate. Sentences are long and their parts ingeniously connected. The school grammarians of the period focus on the longer swatch of language, that is, the sentence rather than the word. They classify sentences into two kinds: compound and complex, based on a rough classification of conjunctions into coordinate and subordinate. Some grammarians (as William C. Fowler and Samuel S. Greene) note "transformation of sentences." Fowler calls the transformations "grammatical equivalents" or synonymous word-groups produced by grammatical variations. The complexity of interrelationship which Victorians saw on their whatnot shelves, their wallpaper, their bridges and canal locks, they thus see also in their sentences. They look at reality through this type of grid whether they look at household furnishing or grammar. The grammarians expressed the imagery of their age in their complicated diagrams which flower in many different varieties, from looking like steamboat engine models to lying-down trees. The faith in complexity is expressed in the involuted sentences of Macaulay, Arnold, Newman, Ruskin, Carlyle Teachers also express in the ornate apparatus of their textbooks this pressure toward complexity as an end of positive value. Grammar textbooks are replete with rules, exercises, passages of false syntax, observations, remarks, models. The assembly line, programed learning theory of teaching develops vigorously in the midnineteenth century.

What is the imagery-concept structure of the twentieth century? For most it is mechanistic. American culture, including the American language, is for Louis Muinzer a massive "Renaissance machine . . .

ticking away in the sun."[1] For others, it is a latticework mobile in cosmic space shifting and turning, prism-like, always in a flux of half-patterned relationships whose dimensions stretch into the unknowable. The grammar of many modern interpreters is impersonal, mechanistic, operational, computational—"ticking away in the sun." The diagrams which represent their analyses have many subterranean layers or branchings. The "surface" grammar of structural linguistics is founded on the concept of a sentence as a left to right series of slots. Each slot in the lattice work is filled with a form from a certain set of items. Among the most important items are the so-called form classes. These are the words which change their form as they shift position in the sentence. The noun *beauty* becomes the verb *beautify,* the adjective *beautiful,* the adverb *beautifully. Beauty* belongs to the same grammatical set of items as *glory, activity, freedom, table*—that is, the noun set of items. These items are like each other but also unlike, as the hearts or spades of a bridge deck are like and unlike each other. As a bridge game sometimes requires the player to play one of a certain suit at a certain time, so the English language is interpreted as requiring a speaker or writer to say or write one of a set of words at a certain place in the sentence or to speak one of a repertoire of dialects in a certain situation in society. In writing, authors sometimes compose as if they conceived of sentence-making as a filling of slots: noun slots, verb slots, adjective slots, etc. For special effects, they juggle words from one slot to another. That is they use "slot-slipping" or a special form of it, "form-class shifting," to stress an idea or create a new one. As an example of slipping a new word into an old phrase, we might take a phrase from a recent editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* where Erwin Canham wonders what would happen to the national economy "if *peace* broke out." *Peace* here has been effectively slot-slipped for *war.* We also shift form class words to advertise a new car, for example, or epitomize the twentieth century American: We say, the car has *go;* the man has *drive.*

Transformation grammar presents new metaphors for the linguist and writer to work with in their respective ways. Such terms as "surface grammar," "deep grammar," "kernel sentences," "transforms," all imply new imagery. The first three give the impression of possible chthonic depths in language with kernel sentences discoverable in the subsoil, if invisible on the surface. Generative or transformational theory demands that the student look beyond the explicit surface data of structural linguistics. Where the "sets" of items analyzed in structural linguistics are grammatically the same, lexically different, the "sets" of items analyzed in generative grammar are lexically the same, grammatically different. For example, the sentences "Bill reads the book" and "Mary likes English" are grammatically the same but lexically different. This, then, is a set in the structural linguistic mode. On the other hand, "The letter written by Jack" and "Jack's writing the letter" are lexically the same, grammatically different. Thus this second pair of word groups is a set in the transformational mode. Writers like to use both approaches in their dealings with language. We have seen some evidences of the first in the slot-slipping and form-class shifting examples given above. Authors similarly use transforms for style and meaning; e. e. cummings makes the world at "Just-spring" "puddle-wonderful" and "mud-luscious." From these compound transforms, we are to perceive the "deep grammar" of: The world is as wonderful as a puddle and luscious with mud, or as mud. Theodore Roethke slows up the tempo of the last stanza of "My Papa's Waltz" by his coined transform—"palms caked hard by dirt." The unfamiliarity of such a transform slows the reader's pace and makes the swinging race of the last two lines of the poem seem even faster. A comment in the lead article of a recent *Times Literary Supplement* on a French girl's transform of a cliché shows the interest currently taken in the transform way of looking at language variations. Anyone, however, who has read modern American prose can hardly agree with the editor's conclusion.

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[1] From "Geography and the American Language: An Approach to Literacy," in *Language and Learning,* eds. Janet A. Emig, James T. Fleming, Helen M. Popp (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966).

> A French girl studying English was recently reported to us as having produced the phrase "bored as a stiff." This brilliant combination of "stiff as a board," and "bored stiff" and "bored to death" would be beyond the reach of most native English speakers, apart perhaps from children.

The various ways of using slot-slipping and unusual transforms make for a quirky, ambiguous-if-read-only-on-the-surface style. These multigrammatical devices help the writer to have a number of things going for him at the same time and force the reader to achieve an enlightened linguistic sense to understand the writing of his day. Twentieth century style is provocative and complex in its own special way. Though we have a "plain modern," which still perpetuates the kind of style Adam Smith praised Swift for, the distinctive style of twentieth century America is quite the reverse. And the linguistic critics of our time can give us insights into the making of our especially twentieth century styles and give us as readers new ways of understanding the meanings of these styles. Without knowing something about the field of language study in our highly language conscious age, we neither write well nor read justly the idioms of our age. This paper suggests that a study of linguistics would be an illuminating supplement to our writing and reading and that writer, literary critic, and linguist share many common understandings about language.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN ENGLISH

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I must begin by admitting that I found my assigned title a little hard to face up to. "The Nature and Organization of Language and Language Study," would be difficult to handle in a year. Within the limits of this paper it is not even possible to outline the various theories of language and the various activities in which scholars of language are engaged. I have decided, therefore, to confine my remarks to a few areas: (1) dialects and usage, (2) the history of the language, and (3) descriptions of English that are currently being taught and talked about.

Part I: Dialects and Usage

One assumption held by all serious scholars of language, an assumption inherited from the nineteenth century period of comparative and historical studies, is that language has variety. To put it another way, there is no such thing as *a* language. A language is simply a group of dialects. When we refer to "the English language," we are merely using a convenient term to encompass the different English dialects used by speakers of all social levels in all parts of the world.

The word *dialect,* as the linguist uses it, carries none of the unfortunate connotations that the term has in everyday speech. Should anyone ask a layman what dialect of English he speaks, he would probably say: "A dialect is something that someone else speaks. *I* don't speak a dialect. I speak English." But everyone in our culture realizes that people from different geographical areas speak differently. That is, he is aware that there are *regional dialects.* He is also aware, though sometimes more dimly, that people in different social groups have different speech habits. These differences linguists would describe as *social dialects.*

Regional dialects, or speech variations according to geographical area, have been widely studied in the United States since the early 1930's. A number of regional research projects have collected valuable information about variations in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. These research projects are known collectively as The Linguistic

Atlas of the United States and Canada. By now a number of books (one recent one being *The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States,* by Kurath and McDavid, 1960) have appeared that present the facts about particular areas where research has been completed. These books, together with derivative articles appearing in *American Speech, College English,* and other periodicals, are rapidly making available to us new knowledge about dialect differences in our country—knowledge that will replace what up to now has been guess and myth.

I am assuming that you will also learn how carefully trained field workers collect information for the atlas records. But I would like to mention briefly the kind of information that is being uncovered. My examples are taken from Harold Allen's article, "The Linguistic Atlases: Our New Resource," which appeared in the *English Journal* for April 1956.

Pronunciation:

1. Do you contrast *witch* and *which*? *Whether* and *weather*? British English makes no such contrast. Nor does Midland, the speech of the Pennsylvania-Delaware Area. Plain /w/ in words like *which* is in cultured use in many places in the English-speaking world. Because both /w/ and /hw/ can be found commonly among cultured speakers, obviously the /hw/ is not an item to be worried through in the classroom.
2. Do you say /kriyk/ or /krik/? The common Northern pronunciation is /krik/. Yet for years the schoolbooks have insisted upon teaching the Southern form. Of course most of us are not prepared to worry about one out of 500,000. But this becomes serious enough, as Allen points out, if you happen to be a member of the school system in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Grammar:

1. Do you say *sick to one's stomach? at? from? with? in?* Since all these forms are used by cultivated speakers in various parts of the country, it would be hard for a handbook to make an arbitrary statement about which preposition is preferred.
2. Do you say *dove* or *dived* as a past form? *Dove,* it appears, is the common form for Northern speakers.

Vocabulary:

1. Do you say *bucket* or *pail*? *window shade* or *window blind*? *pancake* or *flapjack*? It depends upon the part of the country you are from.

2. What do you call the strip of grass between the sidewalk and the street? *Boulevard? Bern? Tree-lawn? Curb? Parking? Terrace? Curb strip? Sidewalk plot?* In this instance, a regional word is unavoidable, since no national word for the object exists.

How will these findings published by linguistic geographers apply to the English classroom? This brings up of course the complicated question of defining Standard English in the United States, where there is no single cultural center, and where a series of regional standards coexist comfortably. If an educated Bostonian were at a conference with an educated Chicagoan and an educated San Franciscan, each would be aware of special flavors in the others' speech. But each would also be able to understand the others, and each would be aware that the others were educated. What this means is that our textbooks must constantly change their statements about usage in the light of the new facts that are being revealed by the linguistic geographers. Perhaps we can even look forward to a time when a teacher from west Texas who has been lured by the California salary scale will not insist that her innocent charges in San Francisco pronounce *creek* as /kriyk/.

I should say one more thing here about how linguistic geography will find a place in the elementary and secondary classroom. Some of you have no doubt seen the fine NCTE publication called *Dialects—USA*. This little pamphlet, which was written with the specific purpose of introducing the subject matter of regional variations into our secondary schools, actually contains exercises that encourage the students to survey dialect differences in their own areas.

Now, briefly, to another kind of variation in language, the variation that occurs among speakers in different social groups. The pioneering studies in the thirties and forties of men like Leonard and Marckwardt and Pooley and Fries have changed and will continue to change the statements made about usage in the handbooks. In the past, teachers and students have been taught to think that there was a right and wrong in matters of usage, that somehow in some mystical, God-given way it has been possible to decide that *he brought* is more correct and more logical and more moral than *he brung*. Some, who have tried to be more in tune with the times, have managed to substitute *appropriate* and *inappropriate* for right and wrong. But until fairly recently very few teachers or students have taken the trouble to go behind the "rules" and ask just why one verb form was preferred to another. Did God say so? Did an academy say so? Did a government say so? Did a Latin scholar say so?

Usage (as related to social class dialects) will be approached quite differently in the classrooms of the future. This approach will involve the creation of an entirely new set of attitudes, some of which I shall try to summarize in brief:

1. That any society has different social groups and that among these groups there are differences in language practice. In other words, there are social as well as regional dialects.
2. That the speech habits of the dominant culture carry with them a certain prestige. If the group uses *brought* as the past of *bring*, then this form automatically acquires prestige. It does not do so because *brought* is inherently clearer, more correct, or more logical.
3. That in the school systems of the United States, which assume that every child should be given equal opportunity, it is our responsibility to see that all of the students are able to control the prestige dialect when it is to their advantage to do so.

The investigator, then, must make the most careful survey he can to uncover the facts of English usage. I refer you here to Professor Fries's *American English Grammar*, which is a pioneering study of written materials, and to Professor McDavid's research project that is currently being carried out in the Chicago area. Once there is a clearly understood list of items that are to be taught and once these items are arranged in a reasonable sequence, then it will be necessary to see that the students are able to use the preferred forms whenever it is appropriate for them to do so. This will mean introducing the kind of oral drill that is presently being employed in the teaching of English as a foreign language. It will mean for some students a slight change in dialect—they might have to change from *he don't* speakers to *he doesn't* speakers. For other students, whose dialect in the home may differ drastically from the prestige dialect, it will probably mean bidialectalism. That is, the students will go on using one dialect with their family and friends, but they will be taught to use another in professional and social situations where it is called for. All this will *not* mean giving a series of rules. As experienced teachers well know, it does not help to tell a student who says *he seen* that *saw* is the past tense and *seen* is the past participle.

Part II: The History of the Language

A second fundamental assumption that we have inherited from the nineteenth century is that language changes—and that change is inevitable and natural in a living language. Examples of change are everywhere: Colloquial Latin has become Spanish, French, Portuguese, and the other Romance languages. Classical Latin, of course, has not changed because classical Latin is a dead language. What is more, change need not mean corruption or chaos. It often, as in the auxiliary verb system of contemporary English, means a gain in flexibility and precision. The obligatory choice between *I speak English* and *I am speaking English* is unique, as far as I know, among the Indo-European languages. And some of the complex distinctions in *If I had known you were going to ask that question, I would have been thinking about an answer* are rather recent developments in the English verb system.

We are constantly learning more about the earlier stages of our language, and this knowledge is in turn helping us to understand changes that are taking place in contemporary English. Such knowledge also has application in literature. Until someone found out that Chaucer pronounced final *e*'s critics felt that he might have been an amusing writer but that he was a poor technician, woefully unable to cope with iambic pentameter lines.

Some of this renewed concern about the history of our language will surely find its way into the primary and secondary classrooms. In fact, in the recent McGraw-Hill series *Your Language,* one can already see this kind of material. Let me be more specific about some of the subjects I am sure will be introduced:

1. The relation of English to its Indo-European cousins. Our students might be told, for example, that English is a Germanic language, and one of the characteristics of Germanic languages is a two-tense system. This means that the six-tense system of Latin, by definition, could not be applied to English.
2. The changes in pronunciation from Old English to Modern English. Our students in the future should know that Old English is not just English that is old.
3. Changes in grammar. It would be useful for the students to know that Old English was a highly inflected language and that gradually these inflections have worn away so that our primary grammatical signals are now word order and function words. It would be revealing for them to know, for example,

that in Old English the word *the* (or *that*) had at least ten distinct forms, depending on whether or not it preceded (a) a masculine, feminine, or neuter noun; (b) a singular or plural noun; (c) the nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, or instrumental case. It would not be easy to argue that the language should restore these forms in order to be more precise. And with this background, it would be possible to get a better perspective on the *m* that is sometimes put at the end of *who*.

4. Changes in vocabulary. Here I shall simply mention that the student might be told that Old English was almost entirely Germanic in its word stock and that the vocabulary of Modern English is over 50 percent foreign or borrowed. The students will be shown how this happened—and, more significantly, they will be taught to deal with the wealth of synonyms that exist in Modern English. Hopefully they will not be so ready to run to Roget's *Thesaurus* to find twenty-five synonyms for a word and to assume that the twenty-fifth word on the list is exactly the same as the first. With this wealth of synonyms they have a responsibility to learn how to make fine distinctions, to appreciate connotation and range of meaning.

Part III: Four Grammars of English

Underlying all my remarks in this section is the assumption that every language has a system and that it is the task of grammarians—or linguists, as they have come to be called—to provide a simple and elegant description of that system. In the United States today, four ways of describing English are currently being taught and talked about. I shall try to characterize each of these.

But before I begin, several words of caution are in order: (1) The characterization might sometimes approach caricature, since when time is so limited the brush strokes must be broad. (2) A certain amount of labeling is unavoidable, but I do not intend the labels to be judgments. The teacher's first responsibility, as I see it, is to become aware. Evaluation is also necessary, but that must come later.

SCHOOL-BOOK GRAMMAR

One of the four grammars, sometimes called *school-book grammar*, is the kind most of us were brought up on. It had its origins in the studies of Bishop Lowth and his fellow scholars in the late eighteenth century. The popular grammars of Lindley Murray, Samuel

Kirkham, and Noah Webster, all of whom followed Lowth, preserved the normative pattern he had set up. And most of the grammars in our primary and secondary schools today are essentially in the same tradition, with of course frequent changes in the color of the covers and occasional minor modifications in the grammatical statements.

All school-book grammars share a number of characteristics, but if your goal is one of simple identification, the following five should be sufficiently revealing:

1. All school-book grammars use a grammatical description of Latin as the model for their statements about English. This means, among other things, a heavy reliance on paradigms, or sets of inflectional endings. It means, for example, that the verb conjugation will be explained by using the machinery for marking person and number that is required in Latin:

	Past		*Past*	
1.	I loved	we loved	amabam	amabamus
2.	you loved	you loved	amabas	amabatis
3.	he loved	they loved	amabat	amabant

Again, modeling their description after those of the Graeco-Roman scholars, most school-book grammars insist that English words can be adequately classified into eight parts of speech. Unless handled with great care, such a classification, as experienced classroom teachers know, gives rise to more questions than it solves. How is *not*, the device for making verbs negative, like *beautifully* or *up*? How is *the* like *new*? What part of speech is the infinitive-marker *to*? To which of the eight parts does expletive *there* belong?

2. In school-book grammars it is assumed that usage can be arbitrarily decided by grammatical analysis. For example, if *be* is a linking verb, and if linking verbs must be followed by pronouns in the nominative case, then speakers of English are obliged to say *It is I* instead of *It is me*. What speakers of English actually do say is considered irrelevant.

3. A connection between language and a certain kind of logic is common in school-book grammars. Two negatives, for example, must make a positive, so that if someone says *I don't know nothing* he really means *I know something*.

4. School-book grammars usually ignore speech and concentrate wholly on the literary language. As a consequence, most students in our school system today would not be aware of the sound of the noun plural (*two cups*/s/ but *two cubs*/z/), or the sound of the dental

preterit (*he jumped*/t/ but *he rubbed*/d/). And they would have no way of distinguishing the compound noun as in *pócket wàtch* from the noun adjunct and the noun as in *gôld wátch*.

5. School-book grammars, by and large, deal with exceptions. The intent is not to make the student aware of the major grammatical patterns in the language but to make him aware of the places where he might go wrong. It is not interested in the fact that all verbs in affirmative statements have *-s* forms (*he looks*) and that there are two kinds of past tense in English (the dental preterit as in *looked* and the vowel change as in *grew*). It is more interested in whether or not the students might use *growed* or *grew* as a past form.

CLASSICAL GRAMMAR

The second of the four grammars, sometimes called *traditional* but which I prefer to call *classical*, is essentially the product of nineteenth century historical and comparative studies in Europe. Because of a series of historical accidents which we have no time to detail here, the large, multi-volume definitive grammars of scholars like Jespersen, Poutsma, and Kruisinga have had little effect on the statements made in our elementary and secondary textbooks. Indeed, most of the teachers of "grammar" in our schools today are unaware of the existence of these studies. Though the classical grammarians did not always see eye to eye on details, their approach was similar enough to permit a brief summary that will be sufficiently accurate for our purposes. For this summary, I shall rely on Jespersen's one volume condensation (*Essentials of English Grammar*, 1933) of his multi-volume work (*Modern English Grammar*, 1909). Once again, I have chosen only five characteristics to identify the approach.

1. Jespersen says that each language has a system of its own—"English grammar [deals with] the structure of English, French grammar with the structure of French, etc." This means of course a rejection of the earlier notion that Latin could serve as a model in developing a description of English.

2. While Jespersen recognizes that the arbitrary rules of a prescriptive grammar are necessary in teaching foreigners to speak English (the foreign student must be told to say *the new book* and not *new the book*), he points out that descriptive grammar has "greater value." Descriptive grammar, he says, "instead of serving as a guide to what should be said and written, aims at finding out what is actually said and written . . . and thus may lead to a scientific understanding of

the rules followed instinctively by native speakers." These rules, of course, "have to be illustrated by examples."

3. Jespersen does not confuse language with logic, nor does he expect a language to be perfectly consistent. He recognizes that although every language has a system, no system "is either completely rigid or perfectly harmonious."

4. While school-book grammars ignore speech, Jespersen says flatly that language *is* speech. After his introduction, which deals with general principles, he begins the grammar itself with a chapter on sounds.

5. Jespersen recognizes another field of language study when he says that "No one can speak exactly as everybody else or speak exactly in the same way under all circumstances and at all moments . . ." In other words, here is a clear recognition of the existence of social and regional dialects and the need for linguistic geography.

STRUCTURAL GRAMMAR

The "structural" grammars as represented by Fries (*The Structure of English*), Trager-Smith (*An Outline of English Structure*), Sledd (*A Short Introduction to English Grammar*) and Francis (*The Structure of American English*) differ from those of Jespersen and his colleagues not so much in basic approach as in technique. Both the structuralists and the classical grammarians would agree, for example, on the following principles:

1. That every language has a system of its own.
2. That the system must be described by examining actual examples of what is said and not by deciding arbitrarily what ought to be said.
3. That no grammatical system of a natural language is perfectly consistent.
4. That language is primarily speech.
5. That language has variety.

The differences in technique are not easy to summarize, but the following points might help you to recognize structural grammars:

1. Grammatical analysis usually begins with the basic unit of sound contrast, the *phoneme*. The first chapters of a structural grammar ordinarily deal with the *segmental phonemes* (the vowels and consonants) and the *suprasegmental phonemes* (stress, pitch, and juncture).

2. The analysis then proceeds to the next level, the organization of phonemes into *morphemes*, or minimum units of meaning. The word *cats*, for example, has two morphemes—the base /kæt/ and the plural inflection /s/.

3. The next level involves the organization into sentences—that is, the next step involves a consideration of *syntax*.

4. The structuralists have developed a special technique for classifying words into parts of speech, a technique that is sometimes referred to as the *slot and substitution method*. The best way to understand this technique would be to look at a few examples.
   a. A noun is a word like *book* in *The (book) is new*.
   b. A verb is a word like *see* in *I can (see)* or *I can (see) it*.
   c. An adjective is a word like *happy* in *She is very (happy)*.

TRANSFORMATIONAL GRAMMAR

The first detailed explanation of the newest theory of grammar, known as transformational, was presented by Noam Chomsky in *Syntactic Structures* (1957). Since then this promising new theory has stimulated a great many articles in the learned journals. The first attempt to apply transformational grammar in a high school text is Paul Roberts' *English Sentences*. Emmon Bach's college text, *An Introduction to Transformational Grammars*, has also appeared.

The basic assumption of transformational grammar is that a language is a set of sentences and that a grammar is a series of rules which describe as simply as possible how all the sentences in the language (not only those we know but the new ones any native speaker continues to construct whenever he has need for them) can be formed. Ordinarily, transformational grammars of English will have the following three-part organization.

1. The first section will contain the phrase-structure rules, which explain the construction of the basic (or kernel) sentences. Transformational grammar assumes that English has a small set of basic sentences (all affirmative statements) which are combined in various ways to build more complicated structures. For English, some of the basic sentences would be:
   a. Subject-intransitive verb. *John reads.*
   b. Subject-verb-object. *John reads books.*
   c. Subject-*be*-adjective. *John is intelligent.*

2. The second section contains transformational rules which explain how to go from the basic sentences to more complex ones.

Transformational rules are of two kinds: simple, involving a single sentence (*John reads→John doesn't read, John reads→Does John read?*) and generalized, involving two or more sentences (*The boy is John. You are speaking to the boy.→The boy you are speaking to is John.*)

3. Since transformational rules are expressed in morphemes rather than words, the third section of a transformational grammar must give morphophonemic rules like this:

a. *jump* + past = /jəmpt/
b. *sing* + past = /sæŋ/
c. *do* + S = /dəz/

Obviously, no one after such a brief summary could be expected to appreciate the differences in the four English grammars I have just tried to describe. The next step, the inevitable step, is to begin to work with actual sentences, to apply the principles of these grammars—Sledd, Chomsky, etc.—to specific instances in your language.

Language
Theory

THE CURRENT SCENE IN LINGUISTICS: PRESENT DIRECTIONS*

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The title of this paper may suggest something more than can be provided. It would be foolhardy to attempt to forecast the development of linguistics or any other field, even in general terms and in the short run. There is no way to anticipate ideas and insights that may, at any time, direct research into new directions or reopen traditional problems that had been too difficult or too unclear to provide a fruitful challenge. The most that one can hope to do is to arrive at a clear appraisal of the present situation in linguistic research, and an accurate understanding of historical tendencies. It would not be realistic to attempt to project such tendencies into the future.

Two major traditions can be distinguished in modern linguistic theory: one is the tradition of "universal" or "philosophical grammar," which flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the second is the tradition of structural or descriptive linguistics, which reached the high point of its development perhaps fifteen or twenty years ago. I think that a synthesis of these two major traditions is possible, and that it is, to some extent, being achieved in current work. Before approaching the problem of synthesis, I would like to sketch briefly—and, necessarily, with some oversimplification—what seem to me to be the most significant features in these two traditions.

As the name indicates, universal grammar was concerned with general features of language structure rather than with particular idiosyncrasies. Particularly in France, universal grammar developed in part in reaction to an earlier descriptivist tradition which held that the only proper task for the grammarian was to present data, to give a kind of "natural history" of language (specifically, of the "cultivated usage" of the court and the best writers). In contrast, universal grammarians urged that the study of language should be elevated from the level of "natural history" to that of "natural philosophy"; hence the term "philosophical grammar," "philosophical" being used, of course, in essentially the sense of our term "scientific"—grammar should not be merely a record of the data of usage, but, rather, should offer an

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*Reprinted from *College English*, 27, 8 (May 1966), 587-595.

explanation for such data. It should establish general principles, applicable to all languages and based ultimately on intrinsic properties of the mind, which would explain how language is used and why it has the particular properties to which the descriptive grammarian chooses, irrationally, to restrict his attention.

Universal grammarians did not content themselves with merely stating this goal. In fact, many generations of scholars proceeded to develop a rich and far-reaching account of the general principles of language structure, supported by whatever detailed evidence they could find from the linguistic materials available to them. On the basis of these principles, they attempted to explain many particular facts, and to develop a psychological theory dealing with certain aspects of language use, with the production and comprehension of sentences.

The tradition of universal grammar came to an abrupt end in the nineteenth century, for reasons that I will discuss directly. Furthermore, its achievements were very rapidly forgotten, and an interesting mythology developed concerning its limitations and excesses. It has now become something of a cliché among linguists that universal grammar suffered from the following defects: (1) it was not concerned with the sounds of speech, but only with writing; (2) it was based primarily on a Latin model, and was, in some sense "prescriptive"; (3) its assumptions about language structure have been refuted by modern "anthropological linguistics." In addition, many linguists, though not all, would hold that universal grammar was misguided in principle in its attempt to provide explanations rather than mere description of usage, the latter being all that can be contemplated by the "sober scientist."

The first two criticisms are quite easy to refute; the third and fourth are more interesting. Even a cursory glance at the texts will show that phonetics was a major concern of universal grammarians, and that their phonetic theories were not very different from our own. Nor have I been able to discover any confusion of speech and writing. The belief that universal grammar was based on a Latin model is rather curious. In fact, the earliest studies of universal grammar, in France, were a part of the movement to raise the status of the vernacular, and are concerned with details of French that often do not even have any Latin analogue.

As to the belief that modern "anthropological linguistics" has refuted the assumptions of universal grammar, this is not only untrue, but, for a rather important reason, could not be true. The reason is that universal grammar made a sharp distinction between what we may call "deep structure" and "surface structure." The deep structure of a sentence is the abstract underlying form which determines the meaning of the sentence; it is present in the mind but not necessarily represented directly in the physical signal. The surface structure of a sentence is the actual organization of the physical signal into phrases of varying size, into words of various categories, with certain particles, inflections, arrangement, and so on. The fundamental assumption of the universal grammarians was that languages scarcely differ at the level of deep structure—which reflects the basic properties of thought and conception—but that they may vary widely at the much less interesting level of surface structure. But modern anthropological linguistics does not attempt to deal with deep structure and its relations to surface structure. Rather, its attention is limited to surface structure—to the phonetic form of an utterance and its organization into units of varying size. Consequently, the information that it provides has no direct bearing on the hypotheses concerning deep structure postulated by the universal grammarians. And, in fact, it seems to me that what information is now available to us suggests not that they went too far in assuming universality of underlying structure, but that they may have been much too cautious and restrained in what they proposed.

The fourth criticism of universal grammar—namely, that it was misguided in seeking explanations in the first place—I will not discuss. It seems to me that this criticism is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of all rational inquiry. There is particular irony in the fact that this criticism should be advanced with the avowed intention of making linguistics "scientific." It is hardly open to question that the natural sciences are concerned precisely with the problem of explaining phenomena, and have little use for accurate description that is unrelated to problems of explanation.

I think that we have much to learn from a careful study of what was achieved by the universal grammarians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It seems to me, in fact, that contemporary linguistics would do well to take their concept of language as a point of departure for current work. Not only do they make a fairly clear and well-founded distinction between deep and surface structure, but they also go on to study the nature of deep structure and to provide valuable hints and insights concerning the rules that relate the abstract underlying mental structures to surface form, the rules that we would now call "grammatical transformations." What is more, universal grammar developed as part of a general philosophical tradition that provided deep and important insights, also largely forgotten, into the use and acquisition of language, and, furthermore, into problems of perception and acquisition of knowledge in general. These insights can be exploited and developed. The idea that the study of language should proceed within the framework of what we might nowadays call "cognitive psychology" is sound. There is much truth in the traditional view that language provides the most effective means for studying the nature and mechanisms of the human mind, and that only within this context can we perceive the larger issues that determine the directions in which the study of language should develop.

The tradition of universal grammar came to an end more than a century ago. Several factors combined to lead to its decline. For one thing, the problems posed were beyond the scope of the technique and understanding then available. The problem of formulating the rules that determine deep structures and relate them to surface structures, and the deeper problem of determining the general abstract characteristics of these rules, could not be studied with any precision, and discussion therefore remained at the level of hints, examples, and vaguely formulated intentions. In particular, the problem of rule-governed creativity in language simply could not be formulated with sufficient precision to permit research to proceed very far. A second reason for the decline of traditional linguistic theory lies in the remarkable successes of Indo-European comparative linguistics in the nineteenth century. These achievements appeared to dwarf the accomplishments of universal grammar, and led many linguists to scoff at the "metaphysical" and "airy pronouncements" of those who were attempting to deal with a much wider range of problems—and at that particular stage of the development of linguistic theory—were discussing these topics in a highly inconclusive fashion. Looking back now, we can see quite clearly that the concept of language employed by the Indo-European comparativists was an extremely primitive one. It was, however, well suited to the tasks at hand. It is, therefore, not too surprising that this concept of language, which was then extended and developed by the structural and descriptive linguists of the twentieth century, became almost completely dominant, and that the older tradition of linguistic theory was largely swept aside and forgotten. This is hardly a unique instance in intellectual history.

Structural linguistics is a direct outgrowth of the concepts that emerged in Indo-European comparative study, which was primarily concerned with language as a system of phonological units that undergo systematic modification in phonetically determined contexts.

Structural linguistics reinterpreted this concept for a fixed state of a language, investigated the relations among such units and the patterns they form, and attempted, with varying success, to extend the same kind of analysis to "higher levels" of linguistic structure. Its fundamental assumption is that procedures of segmentation and classification, applied to data in a systematic way, can isolate and identify all types of elements that function in a particular language along with the constraints that they obey. A catalogue of these elements, their relations, and their restrictions of "distribution," would, in most structuralist views, constitute a full grammar of the language.

Structural linguistics has very real accomplishments to its credit. To me, it seems that its major achievement is to have provided a factual and a methodological basis that makes it possible to return to the problems that occupied the traditional universal grammarians, with some hope of extending and deepening their theory of language structure and language use. Modern descriptive linguistics has enormously enriched the range of factual material available, and has provided entirely new standards of clarity and objectivity. Given this advance in precision and objectivity, it becomes possible to return, with new hope for success, to the problem of constructing the theory of a particular language—its grammar—and to the still more ambitious study of the general theory of language. On the other hand, it seems to me that the substantive contributions to the theory of language structure are few, and that, to a large extent, the concepts of modern linguistics constitute a retrogression as compared with universal grammar. One real advance has been in universal phonetics—I refer here particularly to the work of Jakobson. Other new and important insights might also be cited. But in general, the major contributions of structural linguistics seem to me to be methodological rather than substantive. These methodological contributions are not limited to a raising of the standards of precision. In a more subtle way, the idea that language can be studied as a formal system, a notion which is developed with force and effectiveness in the work of Harris and Hockett, is of particular significance. It is in fact, this general insight and the techniques that emerged as it developed that have made it possible, in the last few years, to approach the traditional problems once again. Specifically, it is now possible to study the problem of rule-governed creativity in natural language, the problem of constructing grammars that explicitly generate deep and surface structures and express the relations between them, and the deeper problem of determining the universal conditions that limit the form and organization of rules in the grammar of a human language. When these problems are clearly formulated and studied, we are led to a conception of language not unlike that suggested in universal grammar. Furthermore, I think that we are led to conclusions regarding mental processes of very much the sort that were developed, with care and insight, in the rationalist philosophy of mind that provided the intellectual background for universal grammar. It is in this sense that I think we can look forward to a productive synthesis of the two major traditions of linguistic research.

If this point of view is correct in essentials, we can proceed to outline the problems facing the linguist in the following way. He is, first of all, concerned to report data accurately. What is less obvious, but nonetheless correct, is that the data will not be of particular interest to him in itself, but rather only insofar as it sheds light on the grammar of the language from which it is drawn, where by the "grammar of a language" I mean the theory that deals with the mechanisms of sentence construction, which establish a sound-meaning relation in this language. At the next level of study, the linguist is concerned to give a factually accurate formulation of this grammar, that is, a correct formulation of the rules that generate deep and surface structures and interrelate them, and the rules that give a phonetic interpretation of surface structures and a semantic interpretation of deep structures. But, once again, this correct statement of the grammatical principles of a language is not primarily of interest in itself, but only insofar as it sheds light on the more general question of the nature of language; that is, the nature of universal grammar. The primary interest of a correct grammar is that it provides the basis for substantiating or refuting a general theory of linguistic structure which establishes general principles concerning the form of grammar.

Continuing one step higher in level of abstraction, a universal grammar—a general theory of linguistic structure that determines the form of grammar—is primarily of interest for the information it provides concerning innate intellectual structure. Specifically, a general theory of this sort itself must provide a hypothesis concerning innate intellectual structure of sufficient richness to account for the fact that the child acquires a given grammar on the basis of the data available to him. More generally, both a grammar of a particular language and a general theory of language are of interest primarily because of the insight they provide concerning the nature of mental processes, the mechanisms of perception and production, and the mechanisms by which knowledge is acquired. There can be little doubt that both specific theories of particular languages and the general theory of linguistic structure provide very relevant evidence for anyone concerned with these matters; to me it seems quite obvious that it is within this general framework that linguistic research finds its intellectual justification.

At every level of abstraction, the linguist is concerned with explanation, not merely with stating facts in one form or another. He tries to construct a grammar which explains particular data on the basis of general principles that govern the language in question. He is interested in explaining these general principles themselves, by showing how they are derived from still more general and abstract postulates drawn from universal grammar. And he would ultimately have to find a way to account for universal grammar on the basis of still more general principles of human mental structure. Finally, although this goal is too remote to be seriously considered, he might envision the prospect that the kind of evidence he can provide may lead to a physiological explanation for this entire range of phenomena.

I should stress that what I have sketched is a logical, not a temporal order of tasks of increasing abstractness. For example, it is not necessary to delay the study of general linguistic theory until particular grammars are available for many languages. Quite the contrary. The study of particular grammars will be fruitful only insofar as it is based on a precisely articulated theory of linguistic structure, just as the study of particular facts is worth undertaking only when it is guided by some general assumptions about the grammar of the language from which these observations are drawn.

All of this is rather abstract. Let me try to bring the discussion down to earth by mentioning a few particular problems, in the grammar of English, that point to the need for explanatory hypotheses of the sort I have been discussing.

Consider the comparative construction in English; in particular, such sentences as:

(1) I have never seen a man taller than John
(2) I have never seen a taller man than John

Sentences (1) and (2), along with innumerable others, suggest that there should be a rule of English that permits a sentence containing a noun followed by a comparative adjective to be transformed into the corresponding sentence containing the sequence: comparative adjective-noun. This rule would then appear as a special case of the very general rule that forms such adjective-noun constructions as "the tall man" from the underlying form "the man who is tall," and so on.

But now consider the sentence:

(3) I have never seen a man taller than Mary

This is perfectly analogous to (1); but we cannot use the rule just mentioned to form

(4) I have never seen a taller man than Mary.

In fact, the sentence (4) is not synonymous with (3), although (2) appears to be synonymous with (1). Sentence (4) implies that Mary is a man, although (3) does not. Clearly either the proposed analysis is incorrect, despite the very considerable support one can find for it, or there is some specific condition in English grammar that explains why the rule in question can be used to form (2) but not (4). In either case, a serious explanation is lacking; there is some principle of English grammar, now unknown, for which we must search to explain these facts. The facts are quite clear. They are of no particular interest in themselves, but if they can bring to light some general principle of English grammar, they will be of real significance.

Furthermore, we must ask how every speaker of English comes to acquire this still unknown principle of English grammar. We must, in other words, try to determine what general concept of linguistic structure he employs that leads him to the conclusion that the grammar of English treats (1) and (2) as paraphrases but not the superficially similar pair (3) and (4). This still unknown principle of English grammar may lead us to discover the relevant abstract principle of linguistic structure. It is this hope, of course, that motivates the search for the relevant principle of English grammar.

Innumerable examples can be given of this sort. I will mention just one more. Consider the synonymous sentences (5) and (6):

(5) It would be difficult for him to understand *this*

(6) For him to understand *this* would be difficult.

Corresponding to (5), we can form relative clauses and questions such as (7):

(7) (i) something which it would be difficult for him to understand

(ii) what would it be difficult for him to understand?

But there is some principle that prevents the formation of the corresponding constructions of (8), formed in the analogous way from (6):

(8) (i) something which for him to understand would be difficult

(ii) what for him to understand would be difficult?

The nonsentences of (8) are formed from (6) by exactly the same process that forms the correct sentences of (7) from (5); namely, pronominalization in the position occupied by "this," and a reordering operation. But in the case of (6), something blocks the operation of the rules for forming relative clauses and interrogatives. Again, the facts are interesting because they indicate that some general principle of English grammar must be functioning, unconsciously; and, at the next level of abstraction, they raise the question what general concept of linguistic structure is used by the person learning the language to enable him to acquire the particular principle that explains the difference between (7) and (8).

Notice that there is nothing particularly esoteric about these examples. The processes that form comparative, relative, and interrogative constructions are among the simplest and most obvious in English grammar. Every normal speaker has mastered these processes at an early age. But when we take a really careful look, we find much that is mysterious in these very elementary processes of grammar.

Whatever aspect of a language one studies, problems of this sort abound. There are very few well-supported answers, either at the level of particular or universal grammar. The linguist who is content merely to record and organize phenomena, and to devise appropriate terminologies, will never come face to face with these problems. They only arise when he attempts to construct a precise system of rules that generate deep structures and relate them to corresponding surface structures. But this is just another way of saying that "pure descriptivism" is not fruitful, that progress in linguistics, as in any other field of inquiry, requires that at every stage of our knowledge and understanding we pursue the search for a deeper explanatory theory.

I would like to conclude with just a few remarks about two problems that are of direct concern to teachers of English. The first is the problem of which grammar to teach, the second, the problem why grammar should be taught at all.

If one thinks of a grammar of English as a theory of English structure, then the question which grammar to teach is no different in principle from the problem facing the biologist who has to decide which of several competing theories to teach. The answer, in either case, is that he should teach the one which appears to be true, given the evidence presently available. Where the evidence does not justify a clear decision, this should be brought to the student's attention and he should be presented with the case for the various alternatives. But in the case of teaching grammar, the issue is often confused by a pseudo-problem, which I think deserves some further discussion.

To facilitate this discussion, let me introduce some terminology. I will use the term "generative grammar" to refer to a theory of language in the sense described above, that is, a system of rules that determine the deep and surface structures of the language in question, the relation between them, the semantic interpretation of the deep structures and the phonetic interpretation of the surface structures. The generative grammar of a language, then, is the system of rules which establishes the relation between sound and meaning in this language. Suppose that the teacher is faced with the question: which generative grammar of English shall I teach? The answer is straightforward in principle, however difficult the problem may be to settle in practice. The answer is, simply: teach the one that is correct.

But generally the problem is posed in rather different terms. There has been a great deal of discussion of the choice not between competing generative grammars, but between a generative grammar and a "descriptive grammar." A "descriptive grammar" is not a theory of the language in the sense described above; it is not, in other words, a system of rules that establishes the sound-meaning correspondence in the language, insofar as this can be precisely expressed. Rather, it is an inventory of elements of various kinds that play a role in the language. For example, a descriptive grammar of English might contain an inventory of phonetic units, of phonemes, of morphemes, of words, of lexical categories, and of phrases or phrase types. Of course the inventory of phrases or phrase types cannot be completed since it is infinite, but let us put aside this difficulty.

It is clear, however, that the choice between a generative grammar and a descriptive grammar is not a genuine one. Actually, a descriptive grammar can be immediately derived from a generative grammar, but not conversely. Given a generative grammar, we can derive the inventories of elements that appear at various levels. The descriptive grammar, in the sense just outlined, is simply one aspect of the full generative grammar. It is an epiphenomenon, derivable from the full system of rules and principles that constitutes the generative grammar. The choice, then, is not between two competing grammars, but between a grammar and one particular aspect of this grammar. To me it seems obvious how this choice should be resolved, since the particular aspect that is isolated in the descriptive grammar seems to be of little independent importance. Surely the principles that determine the inventory, and much else, are more important than the inventory itself. In any event, the nature of the choice is clear; it is not a choice between competing systems, but rather a choice between the whole and a part.

Although I think what I have just said is literally correct, it is still somewhat misleading. I have characterized a descriptive grammar as one particular aspect of a full generative grammar, but actually the concept "descriptive grammar" arose in modern linguistics in a rather different way. A descriptive grammar was itself regarded as a full account of the language. It was, in other words, assumed that the inventory of elements exhausts the grammatical description of the language. Once we have listed the phones, phonemes, etc., we have given a full description of grammatical structure. The grammar is, simply, the collection of these various inventories.

This observation suggests a way of formulating the difference between generative and descriptive grammars in terms of a factual assumption about the nature of language. Let us suppose that a theory of language will consist of a definition of the notion "grammar," as well as definitions of various kinds of units (e.g., phonological units, morphological units, etc.). When we apply such a general theory to data, we use the definitions to find a particular grammar and a particular collection of units. Consider now two theories of this sort that differ in the following way. In one, the units of various kinds are defined independently of the notion "grammar"; the grammar, then, is simply the collection of the various kinds of unit. For example, we define "phoneme," "morpheme," etc., in terms of certain analytic procedures, and define the "grammar" to be the collection of units derived by applying these procedures. In the other theory, the situation is reversed. The notion "grammar" is defined independently of the various kinds of unit; the grammar is a system of such-and-such a kind. The units of various kinds are defined in terms of the logically prior concept "grammar." They are whatever appears in the grammar at such-and-such a level of functioning.

The difference between these two kinds of theory is quite an important one. It is a difference of factual assumption. The intuition that lies behind descriptive grammar is that the units are logically prior to the grammar, which is merely a collection of units. The intuition that lies behind the development of generative grammar is the opposite; it is that the grammar is logically prior to the units, which are merely the elements that appear at a particular stage in the functioning of grammatical processes. We can interpret this controversy in terms of its implications as to the nature of language acquisition. One who accepts the point of view of descriptive grammar will expect language acquisition to be a process of accretion, marked by gradual growth in the size of inventories, the elements of the inventories being developed by some sort of analytic or inductive procedures. One who accepts the underlying point of view of generative grammar will expect, rather, that the process of language acquisition must be more like that of selecting a particular hypothesis from a restricted class of possible hypotheses, on the basis of limited data. The selected hypothesis is the grammar; once accepted, it determines a system of relations among elements and inventories of various sorts. There will, of course, be growth of inventory, but it will be a rather peripheral and "external" matter. Once the child has selected a certain grammar, he will "know" whatever is predicted by this selected hypothesis. He will, in other words, know a great deal about sentences to which he has never been exposed. This is, of course, the characteristic fact about human language.

I have outlined the difference between two theories of grammar in rather vague terms. It can be made quite precise, and the question of choice between them becomes a matter of fact, not decision. My own view is that no descriptivist theory can be reconciled with the known facts about the nature and use of language. This, however, is a matter that goes beyond the scope of this discussion.

To summarize, as the problem is usually put, the choice between generative and descriptive grammars is not a genuine one. It is a choice between a system of principles and one, rather marginal selection of consequences of these principles. But there is a deeper and ultimately factual question, to be resolved not by decision but by sharpening the assumptions and confronting them with facts.

Finally, I would like to say just a word about the matter of the teaching of grammar in the schools. My impression is that grammar is generally taught as an essentially closed and finished system, and in a rather mechanical way. What is taught is a system of terminology, a set of techniques for diagraming sentences, and so on. I do not doubt that this has its function, that the student must have a way of talking about language and its properties. But it seems to me that a great opportunity is lost when the teaching of grammar is limited in this way. I think it is important for students to realize how little we know about the rules that determine the relation of sound and meaning in English, about the general properties of human language, about the matter of how the incredibly complex system of rules that constitutes a grammar is acquired or put to use. Few students are aware of the fact that in their normal, everyday life they are constantly creating new linguistic structures that are immediately understood, despite their novelty, by those to whom they speak or write. They are never brought to the realization of how amazing an accomplishment this is, and of how limited is our comprehension of what makes it possible. Nor do they acquire any insight into the remarkable intricacy of the grammar that they use unconsciously, even insofar as this system is understood and can be explicitly presented. Consequently they miss both the challenge and the accomplishments of the study of language. This seems to me a pity, because both are very real. Perhaps as the study of language returns gradually to the full scope and scale of its rich tradition, some way will be found to introduce students to the tantalizing problems that language has always posed for those who are puzzled and intrigued by the mysteries of human intelligence.

Language
Theory

A GENERATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

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The generative-transformational bibliography which follows deals exclusively with studies in English syntax. It is prepared for the non-specialist; no item in the bibliography requires a great deal of sophistication in modern approaches to language study, and most of the items can be read by people with no formal training in either the structural or transformational models. Although there are a number of different generative-transformational grammars that are presently being seriously considered by scholars, this bibliography is confined to the school of thought which is led by Noam Chomsky, and is currently being researched at such schools as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Indiana, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, University of Illinois, and University of Texas.

Bach, Emmon. *An Introduction to Transformational Grammars*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964. The title of this book may be misleading, since the reader would probably need some previous training in generative or transformational grammar. It is an excellent book, it contains a bibliography, and it draws examples from many languages, including English.
Reviewed in *The Prague Bulletin of Mathematical Linguistics*, 1 (1964), 55-74;
Reviewed in *Foundations of Language*, 1 (1965), 129-132 by R. de Rijk;
Reviewed in *Harvard Educational Review*, 34, 1 (Fall 1964), 596-599 by D. Terrence Langendeen.

Beissel, George R. *Linguistics, Usage, and Composition: A Synthesis of Grammatical Systems.* Ann Arbor, Michigan: Beissel English Services, 1965. This is probably the first transformational text designed exclusively for the teaching of composition. It is planned for use in eighth or ninth grade.

Boyd, Julian C., and Harold V. King. "Annotated Bibliography of Generative Grammar," *Language Learning*, 12, 4 (1962), 307-312. This bibliography is divided into five sections: 1. Introductory General Works, 2. More Difficult General Works, 3. Particular Problems in Grammar, 4. Phonology and Morphophonemics, and 5. Grammar and Semantics.

Blake, Robert W. "Linguistics and the Teacher," *The English Record*, 16, 1 (October 1965), 10-19. This article discusses some of the weaknesses of traditional grammar, and some of the basic assumptions of the structural and transformational models of grammar.

Bloomfield, Morton W., and Leonard Newmark. *A Linguistic Introduction to the History of English*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963. This book sets up a grammar to generate early modern English. As an example, the authors use the grammar they have established for generating the King James' version of the

Lord's Prayer.

Reviewed in *Language*, 40 (1964), 465-483 by James Sledd;

Reviewed in *Harvard Educational Review*, 34, 2 (Spring 1964), 350-353 by Charlton Laird.

Chomsky, Noam. "Some Methodological Remarks on Generative Grammar," *Word*, 17, 2 (August 1961), 219-239; reprinted in Harold B. Allen's *Readings in Applied English Linguistics* (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1964), pp. 173-192. This article explains some of the basic assumptions of generative grammar, and explains what a grammar should do. Also Chomsky outlines a formal system for determining degrees of grammaticalness.

———————. *Syntactic Structures*. 'S-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co., 1957. This is probably the book most often referred to dealing with the transformational model. It shows the inadequacies of a Markov grammar, and of a phrase-structure grammar, and then uses examples from English (mainly) that established a need for the transformational component.

Reviewed in *Language*, 33, 3, Part 1 (July-September 1957), 375-408 by Robert B. Lees;

Reviewed in *American Anthropologist*, 51 (1949), 160-162 by Robbins Burling;

Reviewed in *Boletin de Filologia* (Chile), 14 (1962), 251-257 by Heles Contreras;

Reviewed in *Archivum Linguisticum*, 10 (1958), 50-54 by William Haas;

Reviewed in *Bulletin de la Societe de Linguistique de Paris*, 56 (1961), 38-40 by G. Mounin;

Reviewed in *Vepresy Yazykoznaniya*, 1 (1959), 133-138 by E. V. Paducheva;

Reviewed in *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 24 (1958), 229-231 by C. F. Voegelin.

———————. "A Transformational Approach to Syntax," *Third Texas Conference on Problems of Linguistic Analysis in English*, ed. Archibald A. Hill. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1962, pp. 124-186. This article contains a theoretical discussion of generative grammar, and then as an example presents a generative grammar of English. There is discussion by Stockwell, Hill, Hatcher, Sledd, Winter, Long, Smith, Lehmann, and Sacks.

Dingwall, William Orr. *Transformational Generative Grammar, A Bibliography*. Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1965. This bibliography gives a rather thorough listing of published materials, and of unpublished conference papers given at LSA and LCNY conventions. The bibliography indicates that significantly more materials are available for modern English than for any other language; but it also indicates that some transformational materials are also available for seventy-four other languages.

Dinneen, Francis P. *An Introduction to General Linguistics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966. Chapter 12 is entitled, "Transformation Grammar," and was written by Noam Chomsky.

Fillmore, Charles J. "Indirect Object Constructions in English and the Ordering of Transformations," *Project on Linguistic Analysis*. Columbus: Ohio State University, 1 (1962), 1-49. A more recent edition of this same article is available as a monograph (MLA 1) published in the Hague by Mouton and Company, 1965. This article presents evidence to show that the ordering of rules in Lees' *Grammar of English Nominalizations* and in Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* and "A Transformational Approach to Syntax" could be improved. He also discusses the relationships of certain indirect-object sentences.

Francis, W. Nelson. "The Present State of Grammar," *English Journal*, 52, 5 (May 1963), 317-321; reprinted in *Lingustics in the Classroom*, ed. Thomas H. Wetmore, (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), pp. 1-5. This article quite objectively states the present conflict between traditional, structural, and transformational grammars.

Gleason, Henry A., Jr. *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*, rev. ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961. Both Chapter 12, "Transformations," (pp. 171-194) and Chapter 13, "Language and Grammars," (pp. 195-221) are transformational. Gleason also has an article entitled "Transformations" in *Perspectives on Language*, eds. Rycenga and Schwartz.

————————. *Linguistics and English Grammar*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965. Chapter 9, "Relation and Process" sets the stage for three chapters on transformational grammar. Chapters 10, 11, and 12 are entitled "Generative Grammar I, II, and III" respectively. Gleason also makes other allusions to the generative-transformational model throughout the book.

————————. "What Grammar?" *Harvard Educational Review*, 34, 2 (Spring 1964), 267-281. Gleason indicates that transformational-generative studies are now receiving the greatest attention; however, he warns that the transformational model does not supplant the structural model any more than the structural model has supplanted the traditional model.

See also pp. 331-332 of the same issue of *Harvard Educational Review* for a letter to the editor about Gleason's article in relation to the teaching of English in Westport, Connecticut.

Gunter, Richard. "A Problem in Transformational Teaching," *Language Learning*, 11, 3 and 4 (1961), 119-124. This article discusses those aspects of the transformational model which are useful in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Guth, Hans P. *English Today and Tomorrow, A Guide for Teachers of English*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964. In Chapter One, "Grammar," (pp. 51-57) Guth briefly compares the traditional, structural, and transformational models, illustrating that the transformational model has certain potentials. Nevertheless, it is not the end-all grammar.

Hamp, Eric P. (moderator). "The Transformation Theory: Advantages and Disadvantages," *Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics*, No. 14 (1962), 3-50. This panel discussion had as its participants Raimonde Dallaire, William W. Gage, and Paul M. Postal. Other contributors to the discussion were Gary Martins, Einar Haugen, Carleton Hodge, Paul Garvin, Charles Bidwell, Westbrook Barritt, James Redden, and Joseph Reif.

Hill, Archibald A. "Grammaticality," *Word*, 17, (April 1961), 1-10; reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, pp. 163-172, ed. Harold B. Allen. Hill suggests new tests for grammaticality using transformations and informants.

Reviewed in *Word*, 20 (1964), 471-487 by Charles J. Fillmore.

————————. *Third Texas Conference on Problems of Linguistic Analysis in English*, Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1962. This book contains an article by Noam Chomsky entitled, "A Transformational Approach to Syntax." It also contains articles by two structuralists, James H. Sledd and Henry Lee Smith Jr., and a traditionalist, Ralph B. Long. After each article there is a discussion by Chomsky, Hatcher, Hill, Long, Sledd, Smith and Stockwell.

An Interview with Paul Roberts. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965. This pamphlet consists of fifteen questions being asked of Paul Roberts about the role linguistics can play in elementary school education. The pamphlet was prepared by the publishers to promote the Roberts English Series for grades 3 through 6.

Lees, Robert B. "The Grammar of English Nominalizations," *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 26, 3, Part 2 (July 1960). This monograph first gives the phrase structure rules and transformations that are relevant to the making of nouns, noun phrases, and noun clauses in English, and then shows how nouns, noun phrases and noun clauses are derived from kernel sentences. In his preface to the third printing of this monograph (1964), Lees attempts to bring the reader up to date on more recent developments in transformational grammar.

Reviewed in *American Anthropologist*, 62 (1960), 1110-1111 by Henry A. Gleason;

Reviewed in *Language*, 38 (1962), 434-444 by Archibald A. Hill;

Reviewed in *Word*, 18 (1962), 326-353 by Fred Householder;

Reviewed in *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 28 (1962), 134-146 by Paul Schachter.

—————————. "The Grammatical Basis of Some Semantic Notions," *Report of the 11th Annual Round Table on Linguistics*, eds. Bernard Choseed and Allene Guss. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University, 1962, pp. 5-20. Lees suggests that many of the things that are generally considered only in the province of semantics can with more efficiency be studied as part of the grammar proper. As an example, he studies the concept of "modifier" in English.

—————————. "The Promise of Transformational Grammar," *English Journal*, 52, 5 (May 1963), 327-330; reprinted in *Linguistics in the Classroom*, ed. Thomas H. Wetmore, pp. 11-15. This article does not attempt to show directly how transformational grammar can be applied to classroom situations, but is rather a description of transformational grammar presented to classroom teachers, with the hope that they themselves will be able to make the actual applications.

—————————. "Some Neglected Aspects of Parsing," *Language Learning*, 11, 3 and 4 (1961), 171-181; reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen, pp. 146-155. This article points out that the elementary school teacher should be more concerned with the construction of correct sentences, and less concerned with the analysis of sentences. Lees explains how the transformational model can help the teacher with this new emphasis.

—————————. "Transformation Grammars and the Fries Framework," (read at the meeting of the section on linguistics of the Midwest Modern Language Association, Lincoln, Nebraska, April 27, 1962); reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen, pp. 137-146. This article explains some of the contributions of the structural linguists, and goes on to explain how the structural model is inadequate without a transformational component.

Lozano, Anthony. "Basic English Sentences," *Language Learning*, 13, 2 (1963), 109-111. This article discusses some of the effects of transformations in English.

Malmstrom, Jean, "The Workshop on Generative Grammar," *College Composition and Communication*, 13 (October 1962), pp. 26-30. This number contains a report on papers given by Chomsky, Lees, and DeCamp at the 1962 meeting.

Mellon, John C. *A Grammar of English Sentences* (Book One: "The Basic-Sentence Types and their Simple Transformations"; Book Two: "Complex and Conjunctive Transformations"). Culver, Indiana: Culver Military Academy, 1964. These books are designed for eighth and ninth graders.

Myers, L. M. "Two Approaches to Languages," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 77, 4, Part 2 (September 1962), 6-10; reprinted in Harold B. Allen's *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, pp. 423-431. This article casts doubts on the usefulness of transformational grammar in general instruction.

"The New Grammar," *Newsweek*, 66 (December 13, 1965), 64-65. This article compares the "new grammar" with the "new math," showing some of the things being done with transformational grammar at the elementary school level.

Nilsen, Don L. F. "New Diagrams for Old," *The English Record*, 16, 1 (October 1965), 20-23, 34-36. This article discusses some of the inadequacies of traditional diagraming, and shows how transformational grammar is not inadequate in the same ways.

Ohmann, Richard. "Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style," *Word*, 20, 3 (December 1964), 423-439. This article discusses ways that literature can be analyzed by breaking sentences down into kernels, and specifying what transformations have been applied to the kernels to arrive at the actual sentences.

O'Neil, Wayne A. (narrator). *Transformational Grammar Series*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965. This is a series of eight thirty-minute black and white films originally prepared at the Oregon Curriculum Study Center USOE Program under Project English. Film numbers one through seven explain the application of transformational grammar to the secondary curriculum, and film number eight is a demonstration of transformational grammar being used in a junior high school classroom. The eight films are currently being revised. Accompanying the films is a pamphlet by Wayne O'Neil entitled, *Kernels and Transformations*, which is an amplification of the films and a series of related exercises.

Postal, Paul M. "Underlying and Superficial Linguistic Structure," *Harvard Educational Review*, 34, 2 (Spring 1964), 246-266. This article presents evidence for the necessity of having a grammar which represents the deep structure as well as the surface structure of a sentence.

Roberts, Paul. *English Sentences*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962. This text book is designed to give high school students insights into English; however, parts of it are normative. Although the book is transformational, the phonology is structural rather than transformational.

Reviewed in *English Journal*, 51, 6 (September 1962), 445-446.

——————. *English Syntax*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964. This is designed as a high school text with *English Syntax Alternate Edition* being planned for use in colleges. However there is little difference between the two editions which are programed and totally transformational.

Reviewed in *English Journal*, 54 (February 1965), 154-155.

——————. "Linguistics and the Teaching of Composition." *English Journal*, 52, 5 (May 1963), 331-335; reprinted in *Linguistics in the Classroom*, Thomas H. Wetmore, ed., pp. 16-20. This article views structural grammar as an outgrowth of traditional grammar and transformational grammar as an outgrowth of structural grammar.

——————. *The Roberts English Series, A Linguistics Program*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966. This series of transformational texts is designed for grades 3 through 12. The books for grades 3 through 6 have been published (as of January 1966); those for grades 7 through 9 are completed, and will be published soon; and Dr. Roberts is currently working on grades 10 through 12.

——————. "Transformational Grammar," *Introductory Readings on Language*, rev. ed., Wallace L. Anderson and Norman C. Stageberg (eds.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966, pp. 443-450. Roberts shows how Fries, Francis, and Lloyd and Warfel all have basic-sentence types similar to kernels in their structural approaches. They expand these basic sentences similar to transformations.

Rogovin, Syrell. *Modern English Sentence Structure*. New York: Random House, 1965. This book planned for high school students is not nearly as complete as is Roberts' *English Syntax*, but it is easier, and would therefore probably be more appropriate as a text at the junior high level, and for some high school classes.

Reviewed in *English Journal*, 54, 8 (November 1965), pp. 784-5 by Don Nilsen.

Rosenbaum, Peter S. "On the Role of Linguistics in the Teaching of English," *Harvard Educational Review*, 35, 3 (Summer 1965), 332-348. This article finds transformational grammar pedagogically preferable to structural grammar, even though transformational grammar has some problems for classroom teaching which have not yet been worked out.

Sleater, Mary D. "Grammatical Theory and Practice in an English Grammar Class," *Language Learning*, 9 (1959), 1-11. This article is directed at teachers who teach a college course in English grammar, and the author says that these teachers are obligated to teach the best available English grammar, and to teach why it is best, and to give a correct impression of linguistic theory and method. She feels that this can be done only by teaching the transformational model.

Sledd, James. "Syntactic Structures," *The English Leaflet*, 61 (Mid-winter 1961), 14-23, 54; reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen, pp. 414-422. This is a review of Paul Roberts' *English Sentences*. Dr. Sledd feels that Roberts ". . . may have underestimated the differences and overestimated the similarities between structuralists and transformationalists." He objects to Roberts' using a structural concept of immediate constituents and of phonology in a transformational grammar.

Stageberg, Norman C. *An Introductory English Grammar*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965. Aspects of the transformational model are used occasionally throughout the book. Part Four (pp. 287-383) is a transformational grammar of English written by Ralph Goodman.

Teeter, Karl V. *Grammar and Generative Grammar*. Boston: Commission on English kinescope, for the College Entrance Examination Board. This is a 30-minute demonstration for teachers—designed for 16mm projection or television.

Temperley, Mary S. "Transformations in *English Sentence Patterns*," *Language Learning*, 11, 3 and 4 (1961), 125-133. This article points out that Robert Lado and Charles C. Fries applied many transformations in *English Sentence Patterns* (the grammar textbook for the University of Michigan's intensive course in English as a foreign language), even though these authors are both structuralists.

Thomas, Owen. "Generative Grammar: Toward Unification and Simplification," *English Journal*, 51 (February 1962), 94-99; reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen, pp. 405-414. This article describes a course at the Indiana University where students of widely varying backgrounds and experience studied the traditional and structural models. During the last part of the course they studied Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*. The students concluded that the transformational model was more unified and simple than either of the other two models.

———————. "Grammatici Certant," *English Journal*, 52, 5 (May 1963), 322-326; reprinted in *Linguistics in the Classroom*, ed. Thomas H. Wetmore, pp. 6-10. This article describes and explains the assumptions of traditional, historical, structural, and transformational grammars.

———————. *Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965. This book describes those aspects of transformational grammar which are most important, in the author's opinion, to teachers and prospective teachers of English. It contains an annotated bibliography.

Transformational Grammar Series. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964. This is a series of eight 30-minute black and white motion picture films plus a 120-page *User's Guide*.

Viertel, John, "Generative Grammars," *College Composition and Communication*, 15 (May 1964), 65-81; reprinted as a pamphlet by the National Council of

Teachers of English. This article discusses the importance of having a generative grammar with general rules. He presents a short grammar of English.

Wehrwein, Austin C. "A 'New English' Gaining Ground—Fresh Approach to Grammar Development by Computer—U. S. Supports Method," *The New York Times*, December 29, 1965, pp. 31-32. This article was a feature story about the 1965 MLA convention. Also of interest is the letter to the editor which it inspired, "Research in Linguistics," *The New York Times*, January 9, 1966, p. E. 13. This letter signed by Noam Chomsky, Jerry Fodor, Morris Halle, Jarrold Katz, Paul Kiparsky, E. S. Klima, and G. H. Matthews (all of MIT) contradicts the idea that the new grammar is a product of computers. It adds that at any rate, transformational grammar should be judged by what it can do rather than whether or not it is a product of "modern technology."

Zidonis, Frank J. "Generative Grammar: A Report on Research," *English Journal*, 54, (May 1965), 405-409. This article reports the findings of a two year experiment in teaching composition skills to ninth and tenth graders by using the transformational approach. The students in the experimental group (those who were taught transformationally) increased the proportion of well-formed sentences they wrote, while at the same time they increased the complexity of their sentences.

USAGE IN FOUR PERSPECTIVES

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In describing a projected study of English usage in Great Britain, Randolph Quirk has indicated that the survey will be concerned with "what people say, what they think they say, and what they think they ought to say." I should like to consider this approach of the British investigators as the first of four valuable perspectives on usage.

Although, for a very large part of any one person's linguistic usage, these three categories will be identical, it is equally clear that there are many items of usage in which there is not perfect coincidence among the three. Often what one says is different from what he thinks he says and thinks he ought to say. In other instances, what one says and thinks he says will be different from what he thinks he ought to say. And it is not particularly difficult to imagine a speaker who could be regularly observed saying "That's him," but who, if questioned, would honestly inform an interviewer that he usually says "That's the man," or "That's the boy," but thinks that he really ought to say "That's he." The student of English usage is especially interested in those items in which at least two of the three categories fail to coincide.

If one considers the full panoply of writings that attempt, or have attempted, to deal with English usage, he will generally find one of two shortcomings from the point of view of this first perspective. Either the writer has assumed that only one aspect of our usage concept (e.g., what we think we ought to say) is of any intrinsic interest or value, or else he has hopelessly confused two or all three of the categories. Let us consider a few examples of such shortcomings. The so-called traditional grammars that were used in almost all school instruction from the eighteenth century down to about 1930 and with gradually diminishing frequency from that time to the present, assumed, where usage was concerned, that the only important consideration was what people (or more specifically the writer himself) thought they ought to say. Since opinions about what ought to be said are, at one and the same time, more conservative than what people actually say or even than what they think they say, and more likely to be quixotic and based on considerations that are totally irrelevant to linguistic usage, the rules that appeared in these common school grammars tended to drift farther and farther from the facts of usage until they became thoroughly ridiculous. An oft cited example of this tendency is the rules for the use of *shall* and *will*, which Charles C. Fries has shown never to have had any basis in the actual usage of educated speakers of English at any period in the history of the language. A single feature of these rules, applied literally, should be sufficient to substantiate the charge that they were ridiculous. If I wished to ask one of you whether you were going to eat lunch in the coffee shop, it would be necessary, according to the rules, for me to speculate whether your answer would be an expression of simple futurity or whether you would be likely to feel determination, strong desire, or some other degree of emotion. Suppose I decided that your answer would most likely be one of simple futurity. Then I would say to myself, "I must use the same form in my question that you should use in your answer if you also know the rules." Having reflected that your answer ought to be, "I shall eat lunch in the coffee shop," I would finally be in a position to phrase my question in its so-called correct form: "Shall you eat lunch in the coffee shop?" Of course, by the time I had decided how to ask the question, you would already have left for the coffee shop, or, more likely, the bar. And, ironically, even after all my agonizing over how to ask the question, if it should turn out that I have misjudged your emotional state—if, in fact, you are determined to eat in the coffee shop—then you will answer, "I will eat in the coffee shop," and reveal me as an ignorant slob who has just said *shall* where *will* would have been correct. The rules failed to indicate whether, in this situation, *you* should ignore your actual emotional state in order to use the form of answer that would make my original question correct and save me needless embarrassment.

Admittedly I have chosen an extreme example of the absurdity of the rules of the common school grammars, but the very fact that such rules were tolerated in these books demonstrated the invalidity of the view of language upon which the books were based. From as early as 1875, serious students of dialectology were engaged in systematic surveys designed to discover the facts of geographical variation in European languages. Increasingly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholarly grammars of English by such great Europeans as Sweet, Kruisinga, Poutsma, and Jespersen began to appear. In America, as early as the second decade of this century, the writings of George Phillip Krapp, in such books as *The Knowledge of English, The Pronunciation of Standard English in America,* and *The English Language in America* reflected the same attitude. From this era also dates the first edition of H. L. Mencken's masterpiece, *The American Language,* whose four editions plus Supplements I and II occupied a major part of the energies of that eminent man of letters during much of the remainder of his lifetime. Mencken's work proved so valuable, in fact, that a single-volume edition, revised by R. I. McDavid, Jr., was issued by Knopf in 1963. During the twenties and thirties, lesser books but directed more immediately to the problems of teaching English grammar and usage were produced by such scholars as Leonard and Moffett, Pooley, and Marckwardt and Walcott. The trend in usage studies that I am characterizing here may be said to have culminated with the publication by Charles C. Fries in 1940 of *American English Grammar,* a book that has not received the continued attention that it deserves.

I have criticized the common school grammars on the ground that they concerned themselves exclusively with what people think they ought to say. It is only fair, therefore, to level a related criticism against books in the tradition I have just been characterizing: they concerned themselves almost exclusively with what people actually say. Such an approach might, at first glance, appear laudable, but a moment's reflection will reveal its shortcomings. We have probably all had the experience of surprise when someone comments on an expression we have just used. Most of the time our speech functions at an unconscious level. Let me cite a personal example. Just recently my wife was about to leave to catch a bus, when a friend telephoned to offer her a ride. In the course of the conversation it developed that the friend was uncertain just where our house is situated in the block. At this juncture, I overheard my wife say, "Why don't I be waiting on the corner when you come?" I thought this an intriguing sentence from the point of view of structural analysis—I wasn't even thinking about it as a problem of usage—and so, after the telephone conversation was over, I called my wife's attention to what she had just said. She found it difficult to believe that she had really uttered the sentence, although, after we had discussed it for a while, she began to think of it as a more natural construction. It seems to be related in some tenuous way to the imperative or the subjunctive and to such sentences as "Why don't you be quiet?" and "If you don't be careful, you'll fall." The point, however, is that my wife's immediate reaction to the sentence as something she would never say, is at least as important to a study of usage as the fact that she had uttered that very sentence not two minutes before. Studies that concentrate exclusively on what people say, although they may provide one kind of very valuable data, are inadequate in themselves to serve as a guide to what ought to be said.

I stated earlier that books on English usage have all tended to err in one of two directions: either they have assumed that only one of Professor Quirk's three categories of data is of any value—and I have now illustrated such shortcomings at some length—or else they have confused two or all three of these concepts. It remains for me to discuss the latter type of shortcoming before turning to the second perspective on usage.

In the decade after World War II, the attitude toward usage expressed in books like Fries's *American English Grammar*, and to a much lesser extent the facts discovered in surveys, began to exert an effect on the teaching of English grammar and composition. During this period the books with which I was most concerned—those designed for college freshmen—began to adopt a different stance toward the basis of linguistic correctness. Where at an earlier period they had had little to say about what made one construction correct and another incorrect, their discussions of this question began noticeably to lengthen. The little that had been said before suggested that correct forms were more logical and more effective—assertions that would have been exceedingly difficult to justify with reference to any actual points of disputed usage. The postwar books began increasingly to state that certain forms were correct because they were characteristic of the usage of educated people.

The interesting point is that while these more recent books accepted the attitude of the usage studies, that correctness is based on what best educated speakers of the language say and write, they rejected all survey findings as to what the best educated speakers actually say. In short, such textbooks pretended to tell the student what people actually say, but, in fact, told him what the author thought people ought to say.

I obviously do not mean to imply that all English textbooks written in the decade following World War II were of the sort just described. There were such outstanding exceptions as Porter Perrin's *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, that made an honest effort to avail themselves of all the currently known information on English usage; but even these exceptions now seem dated because they never found an adequate means of synthesizing information on what people actually say with information on what people think they ought to say. Nor do I wish to be understood as implying that the bad textbooks of this last generation were all cynically motivated to pretend that they were based on surveys of actual usage in order to increase their sales by nominal adherence to what they considered to be a fad, while they continued to dish out the same erroneous information as their predecessors. It is obviously more charitable to conclude that the authors of such books were thoroughly ignorant men. They presumably had never heard of the *Oxford English Dictionary,* or the voluminous grammars of Sweet, Kruisinga, Poutsma, and Jespersen, or the *Linguistic Atlas of New England,* or *Webster's Second New International Dictionary,* or Fries's *American English Grammar.* Otherwise, they could not, without being cynical, have espoused the basis upon which such monuments to scholarship were erected, while ignoring the form and content of the scholarship itself.

Even if we adopt a charitable view, what a bitter indictment we have of the field that we all profess. In what other supposedly reputable discipline can the authors of introductory textbooks for the young safely ignore the findings of the most respected scholars in the field and base their exposition on a combination of personal prejudice, what they can recall from their own high school instruction, and what they can glean without outright plagiarism from the books of their competitors? I know of none.

The second perspective on usage that I wish to discuss is the familiar concept of functional varieties of language. Everyone who has bothered to consider the matter at all is likely to be aware that he does not speak in an identical manner on all occasions, to all kinds of audiences, and when attempting to effect a variety of different purposes. The concept of functional varieties has often been explained by the analogy of clothing: there is no inherent quality that makes a tuxedo a superior item of clothing to a pair of coveralls. There are certainly many social occasions where a tuxedo would be deemed perfectly appropriate but where wearing a pair of coveralls would lead to the forcible ejection of the intruder. Conversely, if one came to work in a service station, wearing a tuxedo, although he might not be bodily removed from the job, he would certainly be an object of ridicule and would wind up concluding that his apparel was most inappropriate for his work. It should be borne in mind that one and the same man might work in a service station and attend a formal dinner, so that in judging the suitability of his clothing for each occasion, we are in no way passing judgment upon the man. Unless we have some hierarchy of values that rates attendance at dinner parties as inherently more important than servicing automobiles, we have no basis for preferring a tuxedo *per se* to a pair of coveralls. Each has a function to perform and is appropriate under some circumstances but not under others.

In the same way, out of the variety of styles of speech and writing that an individual user of the language may employ, certain forms have become associated with certain types of situations and are deemed inappropriate in others. The difficulties of applying what is known about functional varieties to the study of usage are at least two in number: First, it is a great problem how to categorize the almost infinite variety of situations in which language is used, so as to produce a list of functional varieties that is better than arbitrary. Second, even after an optimal list has been prepared, it is virtually impossible to persuade the ordinary user of a grammar book or dictionary—a user who has been reared in the tradition that *correct* means *formal*—that all functional varieties of language are equally correct if used properly and equally incorrect if used inappropriately.

It must have been difficulties of this sort that led the editorial board of the Merriam-Webster dictionaries to abandon such a familiar usage label as *colloquial* and severely to restrict use of the label *slang* in the third edition of the *New International Dictionary*. At the growing edge of the language, as represented by both of these labels, it is often quite an arbitrary matter to decide which category most accurately describes the function of a particular word or construction. Even if a satisfactory decision can be reached at the time a large dictionary is being edited, it has often become inaccurate by the time the book is in print. And, finally, it is all too sad a fact that the users of dictionaries refuse to read prefaces. As a child, I was solemnly informed by more than one teacher of English that colloquial expressions were characteristic of certain odd local dialects of English and ought to be avoided by all right-thinking users of the language. It was a teacher of Latin, I believe, who finally corrected this false impression for me. Faced with difficulties of such magnitude, the editors of *Webster's Third* were, it seems to me, well advised to abandon or restrict usage labels in favor of more extensive citations of actual usage. Critics of this procedure, like Dwight Macdonald, seem to believe that it is the responsibility of a dictionary to assess the cultural attainments of, for example, Willie Mays and a typical contributor to the *New Yorker* magazine (both of whom are cited in the *Third International*), because the ordinary user of a dictionary is unaware of any distinction. After much thought, I have been unable to decide whether this belief indicates snobbishness, or is a ringing endorsement of the common sense of the common speaker of the language.

Let me summarize what I have said about functional varieties of language as a perspective on usage. Certainly functional varieties of language exist. It is familiar, even commonplace, to recognize them. Yet no one has suggested a convenient means of categorizing them. A few generations ago the differences between spoken and written varieties, or, more precisely, between conversational and more formal spoken and written varieties of English, seemed sharp enough to warrant the label *colloquial* for forms that were restricted to the conversational variety. Today, with the increasing informalization of writing and public speaking, it has become more difficult, if not impossible, to label varieties consistently. We may even be approaching a time when dictionaries and other studies of usage should label certain forms as *stiff*, to indicate that they are not suitable for general use but, like evening wear, are restricted to the most formal occasions.

The tendency to confuse functional varieties of language used by one speaker with social dialects used consistently by different speakers should not be underemphasized. Much of the confusion leading to the fruitless controversy over the treatment of the word *ain't* in *Webster's Third* stems from precisely this source. The dictionary's discussion of *ain't* is, as far as my own experience takes me, a model of accurate observation and reporting. There are some uneducated people who quite regularly substitute *ain't* for *am not, isn't, aren't, haven't,* and *hasn't*. There are also some very well educated speakers who never use *ain't* under any circumstances. Many speakers of all degrees of education, including some who use *ain't* upon occasion, believe that the word is incorrect under all circumstances. (A purist friend of mine once told me that even if he were the only living speaker of English who did not use *ain't*, he would continue to avoid it. Thus some people irrationally equate use of the word with original sin, and this is a fact that should be recorded.) However, it is equally a fact that many very well educated people, in all parts of the English-speaking world do use *ain't* upon occasion, especially as a substitute for *am not* in questions. It is quite probable that some special meaning such as facetious, jocular, or emphatic attaches to many, if not all, of these uses of the word, but it is next to impossible to characterize the range of these special meanings accurately.

The information I have just given appears much more concisely in the *Webster's Third International* entry for *ain't*. The result has been that news stories and even some reviewers who should have felt a deeper sense of responsibility to the facts headlined their reports on the book with something like "New Dictionary Calls Ain't O.K." There was, in other words, on the part of many presumably educated or partially educated people, utter refusal to recognize that *ain't* occurs in certain functional varieties of speech among many educated speakers. The confusion of functional varieties with social dialects is best epitomized by a cartoon that appeared in the *New Yorker*. A secretary, seated before a backdrop that bears the Merriam-Webster symbol, is informing a caller, "Dr. Gove ain't in." The cartoon, I feel, would be much funnier if what it reveals about the level of understanding of the cartoonist and the magazine's editorial staff were not so pathetic.

The third perspective on usage that I should like to discuss is the matter of social and regional dialects, which I have already indicated is often confused with functional varieties of language. An old adage of dialectology is that every word, indeed every linguistic form, has its own history and its own dialect distribution. This is to say that, although the isoglosses, or lines on a map that indicate the farthest extent of usage, often coincide or nearly coincide for two or more linguistic forms, so that the bundle of isoglosses is said to form a major or minor dialect boundary, there are many, many more isoglosses that follow a unique course. In a country like the United States, which is characterized by extreme mobility of population in both the geographical and the social dimension, this tendency is all the more apparent.

Before the earliest publication of findings from the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, it was customary to speak of three major American dialects—New England, the South, and a General American area. The map, for example, in A. C. Baugh's *History of the English Language* shows the New England dialect to coincide exactly with the state boundary lines that delimit New England, and the Southern dialect to coincide exactly with the political boundaries of the former Confederate States of America. Following publication of Hans Kurath's *Word Geography of the Eastern United States*, it became obvious that the earlier conception was erroneous in most details. Kurath concluded that the dialects of the Atlantic Seaboard belonged to three major groups, which he named Northern, Midland, and Southern. Northern included New England and New York State, as well as the northern half of New Jersey and the northern one fourth to one fifth of Pennsylvania. In addition to the remainder of New

Jersey and Pennsylvania, Midland included the northern half of Delaware and Maryland, all of West Virginia, and the area west of the Blue Ridge and the main crest of the Appalachians in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Southern was confined to the Tidewater and Piedmont areas of the Atlantic Coast from Delaware through northern Florida. (Most of Florida had not been surveyed at the time the work was published.)

Kurath also recognized many minor dialect areas. Within the North, the most important were Eastern New England (east of the Green Mountains of Vermont and the Connecticut River, which divides both Massachusetts and Connecticut) and, second the New York City area. Of somewhat less distinctive nature were such subareas as Western New England and the Hudson Valley. Within the Midland lie the Philadelphia area, the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch area, centering on Lancaster in the southern center of the state, Western Pennsylvania, centering on Pittsburgh, and the South Midland, which includes everything from central West Virginia to northern Georgia. Later research in the area to the west of Kurath's original section suggests that the boundary between North Midland and South Midland deserves to be called a major dialect line. In this view, South Midland, in addition to the area described by Kurath, would include all of Kentucky and Texas, most of Tennessee and Oklahoma, the southern half of Missouri and the northwestern half of Arkansas, the southern tips of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and the northern tips of Alabama and Mississippi. Thus, it corresponds roughly to what was once called Southern Mountain and Southwestern speech. The North Midland area seems to become progressively stronger as it moves west, crowding the Northern dialect off the map somewhere in North Dakota, and pushing the boundary of South Midland below the border in the vicinity of El Paso. It should be emphasized that these guesses about dialect lines west of the Atlantic States are far more speculative than Kurath's.

The Southern dialect area, which, to an outsider, had always seemed the most homogeneous of the major areas, proved to be by far the most heterogeneous. It is divided into a multiplicity of minor areas such as (1) Delmarvia, (2) Chesapeake Bay and Tidewater Virginia and North Carolina, (3) the Virginia Piedmont, (4) the North Carolina up-country, (5) the Cape Fear-Peedee corridor, (6) the Charleston area, (7) the Atlanta area, and presumably equivalent minor areas as far west as Louisiana. Finally, it should be emphasized that the publication of Atwood's *Verb Forms in the Eastern United States* and of

Kurath and McDavid's *Pronunciation of English in the Eastern United States* has served to add many refinements and complications to the basic picture presented above.

So far, the description has been limited to regional dialect variation, assuming more or less homogeneous social groupings. While there are many forms that may be termed standard—i.e., usual among educated speakers—throughout the country, and perhaps a very few forms that may be described as substandard throughout the country, interaction of social and regional factors is much more nearly the norm. Thus, a variant may be required of educated speakers in one area and scorned as substandard in another. One concrete example concerns the question whether to pronounce *greasy* with /s/ or /z/. In a northern and western area the pronunciation with /s/ is preferred; in the southern and eastern one third of the country, the /z/ is standard. In some border areas the form with /s/ is merely descriptive, while the form with /z/ carries unpleasant connotations. In other words, in such areas both forms are correct, but they have different meanings. As one who was raised in an area where /z/ prevailed but who now lives in a place where /s/ is almost universal, I generally extend the meaning of *oily* to avoid having to make a choice. The pronunciation with /s/ still seems unspeakably prissy to me, but my native form with /z/ occasionally causes a raised eyebrow.

In the case of the form just cited and of hundreds of others that could easily be brought to attention, where there is no national standard and a variant that is *de rigeur* in one place is all but *verboten* in another, what is a dictionary or a textbook or a teacher to recommend? Far too often they have chosen to ignore the facts and pretend that a national standard does exist. By a curious coincidence, this mythical standard usually coincides with the writer's own speech. (Dialect, according to the famous definition, is what the other man speaks.) It seems to me, however, that our obligation is clear: It is, first, to inform ourselves as best we can as to the real facts of regional and social usage and then to disseminate these facts to our students or readers, along with whatever analysis we care to present of the probable consequences of certain choices. If a student wishes to become a television announcer, for example, he will have to memorize an arbitrary set of pronunciations that do not correspond exactly to the standard speech of any large area, even less to any mythical national standard.

There are, undoubtedly, certain guidelines that could be established in the form of reactions to particular regional dialects outside the area where they are vernacular. So far as I am aware, these have never been drawn up, and to do so carefully would involve a sociolinguistic undertaking of several years duration. We are all familiar, however, with some of the stereotypes associated with regional dialects outside their homes. The dialect of Eastern New England, at best, strikes others as quaint and vaguely pleasant to hear for a change, at worst, pretentious and affected. A person from New York City, if he is *simpatico,* strikes others as a conscious comedian, if he is *antipatico,* as rude, aggressive, even almost violent. The dialects of the northern Middle West probably seem, if not quite rustic in New York and New England, at any rate the mark of someone who is not *in.* In the South these same dialects seem overly precise and prissy and sometimes also aggressive and hostile. Deep southern dialects have often been admired as musical and expressive, while at the same time laughed at because of the degree of their deviation from the norms of other areas. I suspect that in the current lingering crisis over civil rights, these dialects that once seemed pleasant or amusing have taken on overtones of hostility and danger. The South Midland dialect is perhaps the most universally despised of all. In one of its substandard forms it has all but replaced the language of the Sicilian immigrant as the preferred form of speech for TV and movie villains. To the extent that these stereotypes of the major dialects represent the actual reactions of speakers in other areas, the student presumably ought to be informed as to how his speech will affect others if he moves away from his home area. At the same time he ought to be educated to avoid making similar judgments of the auslanders that he comes in contact with.

The fourth and final perspective on usage is that of the part of the language in which the variation is shown. Adopting a more or less traditional classification, we may say that variations in usage occur in phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary.

Regional and social variations that occur in phonology are among the most interesting usage problems to the student of linguistics, but their affect upon and appeal to the layman are quite unpredictable. The latter will seize upon some relatively rare occurrence, like the glottal stop that replaces /t/ before /l/ in a handful of words in certain varieties of New York City English, such as *bottle,* and completely ignore a sweeping change such as the falling together of tense, closed *o* and lax, open *o* before /r/, which affects literally thousands of words. When Kurath made his survey of the Atlantic Coast States in the thirties and forties, the data he collected suggested that the distinction of the two varieties of *o* before /r/ was maintained everywhere but in Pennsylvania. Today, I would venture to guess that the difference has been erased in three fourths of the country, with parts of New England and the deep South as the principal hold-out areas. A few simple illustrations are *four* /for/ : *for* /fɔr/, *mourning* /morniŋ/ : *morning* /mɔrniŋ/, *borne* /born/ : *born* /bɔrn/, and *hoarse* /hors/ : *horse* /hɔrs/. I once adduced more than thirty minimal pairs, using monosyllables alone, to aid a field interviewer who had trouble determining whether informants were making the distinction, because it was not native to him. In the present context, we return to the original question: Why should a major dialect difference seem inconsequential to most speakers, when such a minor matter as the glottal stop is almost invariably noticed?

A similar example comes readily to mind. Most people are aware that Southerners, New Yorkers, New Englanders, and many Englishmen drop postvocalic /r/ before a consonant or a pause, yet they take particular note of this feature only in the speech of Southerners. What is much more likely to be noticed in the speech of Virginians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders is the much less frequent instance of intrusive /r/ after final *schwa* before a vowel in the next word, as in "the idea*r* of it." As a final irony, this intrusive /r/ is required in Standard Southern British, but I have seldom if ever heard an American comment on it. Whatever the reason may be for the curious points of dialect pronunciation that others choose to take note of, part of one's linguistic education probably ought to give him an awareness of the particular features of his own dialect that will be picked upon by outsiders.

It is my impression that the purists of the 1960's are not much concerned with pronunciation. I have a colleague at Berkeley whose linguistic conservatism is such as to make Lindley Murray, were he alive, appear a wild-eyed radical. This man goes out of his way to utter such sentences as "If it don't rain tomorrow, we shall have a picnic," in order to use the subjunctive in a conditional clause. Although I have never heard him do so, I suspect that he would say "A lot of persons is here, isn't it?" in order to secure agreement of subject and verb and concord of pronoun and antecedent. Yet I have rarely heard him object to a pronunciation. I have tried to twit him by pronouncing *precedence* the same as *precedents,* an error against which the orthoepists of a quarter of a century ago fulminated, and he remains impassive. Worse than that, I have even heard him make this and similarly hideous errors himself—errors that by their very nature rob the language of all expressiveness and debase the very currency that is the medium of our social and intellectual exchange—and he seems not to care in the least! I can only conclude that, among English teachers at least, pronunciations are not likely to receive much unfavorable attention. It is in the most strictly grammatical realm that most resistance remains.

The shibboleths of morphology and syntax are too familiar to require much detailed attention here: a verb shows formal agreement with its subject in person and number. This is certainly a fine rule and one that is most often followed. Yet there are a number of common types of subject with which the rule is not invariably followed by educated speakers, particularly in informal writing and conversation. Among these are the collectives, of which *lot*, cited above, is an example. It is all but inconceivable that any educated speaker of English would ever say "A lot of people is . . . ," but this is what the rule requires. With this and similar constructions, I should be inclined to say that the phrase *alotta* has lost its original force as grammatical subject and has come to be considered a modifier of what follows. What follows then determines the number of the verb. Such a rule can be applied with the same consistency as was once the case with the traditional rule. To accept the new rule, however, one must admit that the grammar of the language does occasionally change, so that what we learned in our youth is not equally valid in our old age.

The case forms of pronouns are an especially precarious subject. In the not too distant past, grammarians were arguing against such a sentence as "I was given a book," on the ground that the first word is the indirect object and ought, therefore, to be *me*. Most teaching of this subject in the twentieth century, however, has concentrated on getting pupils to use the subject forms in certain situations where there is a natural tendency in the language to use the object forms. The result of such teaching has been to produce sentences like "He hit the ball to John and I," or, perhaps worse, ". . . to John and myself," when no reflexive or intensive meaning is present. The latter construction now seems to be fully established in the usage of the educated, and I cannot, therefore, make further objections to it. I shall continue to regret, however, its origin as a pretentious hyperurbanism. Give me a good, honest illiteracy like "Us boys hit the ball," which at least shows some *Sprachgefuhl*, in preference to change brought about in an effort to avoid more natural ones.

Still another mistaken direction of modern teaching has attempted to distinguish between adjectives and adverbs by making of *-ly* a universal marker of adverbs. In Old English this suffix transformed nouns into adjectives rather than adjectives into adverbs, as is still apparent from an examination of the function of words ending in *-ly* in present day English. The most general means of forming adverbs from adjectives was the suffix *-e,* which ceased to be pronounced in the fifteenth century. Thus we have many adjective-adverb homonyms in Modern English. One drives a car *fast,* never *fastly.* Although today one can drive a car *slowly,* the adverb *slow* has a more ancient claim on this position and, besides, accords more closely with the tendency of most present day speakers. Our efforts to teach people to speak and write *slowly* have resulted in their producing such sentences as "The rose smells sweetly." My survey of the dialects of California and Nevada indicates that persons with a grade school or a college education tend to say "The hat looks good on you," while those with a high school education normally say "The hat looks well on you." There must be something wrong with an educational system that requires twelve years to corrupt a child's usage and an additional four to bring it back to its original state.

These examples of some of the problems in morphology and syntax are meant to be illustrative only, and certainly do not cover anything like the full range of usage problems in these areas. There remains the matter of vocabulary usage, by which I mean the choice of words to express given lexical meanings, without, necessarily, any structural relationship to other words in the sentence. Some of the loudest protests that have been made over *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* have related to vocabulary problems. The dictionary, for example, under the entry for *infer,* after listing the traditional meanings of the word, indicates that it has come to be used by some educated speakers as a synonym for *imply.* This simple statement, supported by citations, has raised an incredible outcry. One is unable to determine whether the critics are arguing (1) that no educated person ever used the word in this way, in which case they must infer (or imply) that the dictionary staff manufactured the citations or else that the writers cited are uneducated, or (2) that although some educated persons do occasionally use *infer* as a synonym of *imply,* it is the duty of the dictionary to suppress this fact. The first possibility is clearly absurd, and the only authority for the second seems to be that the critic himself maintains the traditional distinction (or thinks he does, or, at least, thinks he ought to). On one point most adverse critics of the dictionary are agreed: entries like that for *infer* hasten the decay of the language by robbing it of the ability to make worthwhile distinctions. According to this logic, my colleague Sheldon Sacks has pointed out to me, we should return to the eighteenth century practice of distinguishing between *you was* (singular) and *you were* (plural) since singular-plural is certainly one of the most basic distinctions in the language and the second person pronoun is one of the most frequently used words in which the distinction might be shown. If you prefer a contemporary example, the critics ought to adopt *you-all* or *you folks* or *youse,* all of which occur in American English as plurals of *you.*

It is almost as if the critics claim that they have been going around using *infer* in the traditional sense and everybody else has been thinking they mean *imply.* And they can't think of any other word they might use to avoid the confusion. And it is all the new dictionary's fault for admitting what is going on. Further comment is hardly necessary.

In a more serious vein, it seems highly unlikely that a language ever loses the ability to make distinctions that are vital to the culture in which the language is used. Most of us would probably fail a test on words that describe the parts of a harness or a farm wagon or a horse and buggy, but technology has removed all of these from our immediate experience. It is also highly dubious that use of *infer* in the sense *imply* has had any effect on the other meanings of *infer.* When *board* took on the meaning of *meal,* it did not cease to mean "piece of wood." Nor, for that matter, did it replace *meal.* It might even be argued that, up to a point at least, the development of additional meanings for old words enriches the language by providing a wider range of possible interplay between words. It could be further argued, whether one believes that *infer* ought or ought not to be used in the sense of *imply,* that the dictionary has performed a valuable service in reporting as fully as possible on the facts of usage. For those who approve of the newly developed meaning, the citations provide a model of usage. Those who disapprove can thank the dictionary for alerting them to the extent of the danger. Perhaps this single example will suffice where vocabulary is concerned.

To apply this to the experience of the classroom teacher, I would recommend advising students of English about usage along the following lines: It is our language that makes us all human. Language is, therefore, quite literally our most precious possession. Men have learned to live worthwhile and rewarding lives without eyesight, without arms, without legs; but, if you can imagine some sort of accident that would utterly deprive you of the ability to communicate with others, even though you were, in other respects healthy and vigorous, I believe you will realize how much worse off you would be. You would have descended from the level of a human being to that of an animal.

Up to the time you entered school, in learning to speak English as well as you did, you made a truly miraculous accomplishment. No one could have instructed you how to achieve this miracle; you did it almost entirely on your own. In learning how to talk, you acquired a tool by means of which you could be instructed in other language matters like reading and writing, and you are coming along very well in these.

But there is a funny thing about the use of English or any other language: no one ever learns to do it perfectly. One can conceive of becoming the best writer of English alive, but he cannot imagine being so good that there is no chance for further improvement. In this way, the use of English is very much like success in sports. A man may hold the world's record for running a given distance, but it is always possible that he may be able to improve further on his best time. Therefore, I would urge you, for as long as you live, to make a continuous effort to improve your use of English. From your use of English and from your ability at mathematics, which is just another special language, people are, in the main, going to judge your intelligence.

Just what is involved in improving your use of English? Perhaps more factors than could conveniently be listed; but two of these which your English teacher is particularly interested in helping you with are your knowledge of the structure of English sentences and your knowledge of English usage. I shall speak only of the second at this time.

The first habit that you must cultivate, in order to improve your knowledge of English usage, is that of accurate observation of the language that is used around you. You should learn to note not only what people actually speak and write, but also what they say about correct and incorrect English. You should develop a questioning attitude about these statements, including those that I will make. You should ask me and others to produce evidence and to explain their reasoning in support of their generalizations. You should feel free to reject conclusions for which the evidence is inadequate or the reasoning invalid. But even when you reject a conclusion for good and sufficient reasons, you should bear in mind that it is one of the facts of English usage that some people have reached this conclusion, and they may judge you harshly if you fail to agree with them.

You should develop the habit, not only of observing what people say and what they say about language, but also of forming judgments as to what kind of people they are. You should ask yourself whether they are the kind of people after whom you would like to pattern your own life. If you make serious mistakes in forming these judgments, you will handicap yourself in what you would like to achieve in later years.

You should become aware that a given person does not speak or write in an identical way under all circumstances. Therefore you should develop a sensitivity, not merely to people, but to the situations in which language is used. Only in this way will you be able to use English in a manner that is appropriate to the great variety of situations in which you are likely to find yourself.

You will discover, however, that even the observations of one person throughout an entire lifetime represent a very limited range of human experience. In order to extend your knowledge of English usage beyond the confines of your own experience, you will need to make continual reference to the codified and systematic knowledge of others that is contained in dictionaries, grammar books, and linguistic atlases. If these books are properly based on observation of what people actually say, what they think they say, and what they think they ought to say—if they give you evidence by which to judge the degree of cultivation of the speakers whom they cite and the type of situation in which a particular usage occurs—then you should give very serious consideration to the advice these books have to give you. In reading even the most meticulous studies, you should not take everything at face value. No single man or editorial board is a final arbiter in matters of linguistic correctness, and to treat them as such is to surrender to an authoritarian form of social organization in one of the most important areas of our existence. In a democracy the individual cannot abdicate responsibility for making his own decisions.

THE DIMENSIONS OF USAGE

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The analysis of American English usage today is a five-dimensional problem—a pentagonal "perplex," if you like. Simple classifications of usage are inevitably also simple-minded. To label a usage like *hadn't ought, he don't,* or *it's me* "incorrect," "illiterate," "bad," "careless," or "substandard" is gross oversimplification. Such analysis is a trap into which we must not fall, inviting though it may be.

A valid perspective on American English usage today must take into account five dimensions:

1. The dimension of method,
2. The dimension of culture,
3. The dimension of function,
4. The dimension of time,
5. The dimension of space.

Let us consider each of these dimensions in order.

First, the dimension of *method;* that is, our choice between speech or writing as methods of communication. When we are very young, we learn to understand and speak English by listening to our elders and imitating them. Out of the vast conglomeration of sounds that we hear, we somehow figure out the basic patterns into which these sounds fall to make sense in English. We figure out the patterns so clearly that we can use them to understand sentences that we have never heard before and to make our own new sentences that other speakers of English can understand. If we did know how little children master their language, perhaps then we could program an electronic computer to handle language as human beings do. To date, however, no one has unlocked this mystery: that every normal child learns to speak his native language by the time he is six years old.

Furthermore, he learns to speak compound and complex sentences as well as simple ones. Recordings of child speech clearly reveal sentences of impressive variety and complexity. In school, the child learns to read and write, facing the problem of relating spoken English to written English. The first books he reads all too often are of the

"See-Dick- See-Dick-run" variety. That is, they are written in very simple sentences. Generally he begins by writing this kind of sentence too. Thus, even though small children can speak long, complex sentences, they begin by reading and writing short, choppy sentences.

The wise teacher helps the child to move on to complicated sentences as quickly as possible, encouraging him to transfer his knowledge of spoken English sentences to his reading and writing of English. Encouragement will speed this process; discouragement may seriously delay it, or even block it at the simple-sentence stage. It is only too easy for the child to take refuge in the dull security of the simple sentences that he can handle without strain. But if he does so, he may be forever denied the advantages of writing skillfully and reading widely.

By such observations we prove the innate separateness of speech from reading and writing as methods of using language. Reading and writing do not "come naturally," as speaking does. They are a function of education.

Education is one essential aspect of the second dimension of our perspective on American English usage: the dimension of *culture*. Our usage of English reflects the level of our education. Let it be understood at once that education does not necessarily equal years spent in school. Reading, travel, and social or business contacts are educational too. Nevertheless, the usage called "Standard English" is typically the language of the college graduate. Standard English is defined by *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* as:

> . . . the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well-established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood.

The typical usage of the high school graduate is almost identical with that of the college graduate, but it has a few significant differences.

For example, compare these two versions of the same paragraph. The first is in Standard English; the second is in the usage of the high school graduate.

> Yesterday when you were away, it began to rain so hard that the cat drowned. The wind blew a lot too and gave me such a scare that I ran into the house and sat

> down for a while. I told the dog to lie down, but he didn't pay any attention to me because all those noises threw him into a panic.

Here is the same paragraph in the usage of the high school graduate:

> Yesterday when you were away, it began to rain so hard that the cat drowned. The wind blew a lot too and gave me such a scare that I run into the house and set down for a while. I told the dog to lay down, but he didn't pay any attention to me because all those noises threw him into a panic.

Note that the differences between these two cultural levels of usage are very few: *run* for *ran*, *set* for *sit*, and *lay* for *lie*. Likenesses far outnumber differences and certainly outweigh them in importance.

Contrast those two very similar levels of usage with a third level: the usage of the person with approximately an eighth-grade education. Here is his typical usage in the same paragraph:

> Yesterday when you was away, it begun to rain so hard that the cat drownded. The wind blowed a lot too and give me such a scare that I run into the house and set down for a while. I told the dog to lay down, but he didn't pay no attention to me because all them noises throwed him into a panic.

Although this cultural level of usage shows many forms which distinguish it sharply from the other pair, the significant differences cluster into only four main types. The first is the use of *you* (and *we* or *they*) with a singular verb—*you was*, for example. The second is the use of the pronoun *them* instead of the determiner *those* as a noun modifier—*them noises*, for example, instead of *those noises*. The third is the double negative with a negative meaning—*he didn't pay no attention*. The fourth is a whole set of nonstandard verb forms: *begun* for *began*, *drownded* for *drowned*, *blowed* for *blew*, *give* for *gave*, and *throwed* for *threw*, for example. By such marks, we recognize the speech of the uneducated in the United States today.

How is it possible to make such firm identification of cultural levels of usage? Our judgments are based on two large-scale collections of evidence. The first is Charles Carpenter Fries's quantitative study of written American English reported in his *American English Grammar*.[1] The second is the massive evidence of American English speech collected for the Linguistic Atlas of the United States. A brief description of each will clarify their seminal importance.

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[1] Subtitled *The Grammatical Structure of Present-Day American English with Especial Reference to Social Differences or Class Dialects* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940).

Professor Fries examined three thousand letters written during World War I to the United States Department of the Interior in Washington, D. C. After establishing certain biographical facts about each letterwriter—his education, social status, and economic background—he analyzed every word in each letter to determine the facts of modern American English as written by persons of various backgrounds. He discovered that three types of written usage could be identified, and that these types correlated precisely with the cultural and educational levels of the writers.

In the first type of writing, the pronoun *I* was always written as a small *i* instead of a capital, and capitalization was omitted also from the names of towns and persons. In addition, no punctuation appeared at the ends of sentences, and certain common words were consistently misspelled. For example, *know* was spelled "no," *wrong* was spelled "rong," *correct* was spelled "crect," *who* was spelled "hu," and *enough* was spelled "anoff." Furthermore, the language of these writers was "poverty-stricken" in vocabulary and grammar. That is, these writers overused words like *get, thing, nice, good,* and *very,* ignoring any of their specific and vivid synonyms. Even more characteristically, these persons wrote sentences that were monotonously simple in structure, exhibiting none of the rich variety of which English sentences are capable. When Fries checked the biographies of these writers, he discovered that none of them had more than an eighth grade education and that all of them earned their livings as manual laborers.

A second type of writing revealed by Fries's letters showed standard capitalization, standard end-of-sentence punctuation and standard spelling throughout. In addition, this type of writing used words, structures, and sentences with some skill and variety. These writers were all college graduates and earned their livings in the professions—medicine, law, teaching, the ministry.

In between these two types of written English lay a third. It showed standard capitalization, standard end-of-sentence punctuation, and standard spelling of the common easy words. Only occasionally, a difficult or unusual word might be misspelled. Such writing was done by persons with an education ranging from at least one year of high school to one year of college or technical school. They were respected citizens in their communities, holding jobs like shop foremen, police chiefs, practical nurses, and mill superintendents.

A remarkable parallelism exists between Fries's three-way classification of American English writing and the three types of American English speech revealed by the Linguistic Atlas of the United States. In order to collect as complete a sample of American speech as possible, the scholars who began the Linguistic Atlas interviewing in the 1930's deliberately selected three types of people to interview. The first type—officially called Type I—was a person with no more than an eighth grade education. The second type—officially called Type II—was a person with a high school education or its equivalent in travel, self-instruction, and social or business contacts. The third type—officially called Type III—was a person with a college education or its equivalent in travel, self-instruction, and social or business contacts.

In order to forestall a common misunderstanding, we should at this point categorically state that when the Atlas investigators classify usages as characteristic of Type I, Type II, or Type III speech, they are not classifying individual persons into social groups. They are generalizing statistically on the basis of hundreds of interviews with native speakers of American English. They do not mean, for example, that all high school graduates do or must say *run* for *ran*, *set* for *sit*, or *lay* for *lie*. We all know high school graduates who speak Standard English and college graduates who do not. In the United States the opportunities for education outside the classroom are many. Indeed, as we have seen in the paragraphs above, significant speech differences between high school and college graduates are so few that they are hardly noticeable. Definitely, the Atlas shows that likenesses far outnumber differences in modern American English speech, just as Fries's study shows that they do in modern American English writing. Most usages are the common property of all users of American English, whatever their social, economic, or educational status. The relatively few points of difference are rightly emphasized in the English classroom. If a child has not learned Standard English at home, the school is duty bound to try to teach it to him in order to improve his social and economic mobility.

The third dimension of our perspective on American English usage is the dimension of *function*. Our purposes in using English and the various situations in which we use it influence the words and expressions we choose in both speech and writing. These words and expressions divide roughly into three varieties: informal, formal, and technical.

Informal words and expressions are the familiar "family-type" ones that we learn from the simple ordinary affairs of our daily life.

We use them constantly and would know them even if we had never gone to school. They are more characteristic of speech than of writing. Slang is one kind of extremely informal usage. On the other hand, formal words and expressions are learned in classrooms and from reading. They are more likely to be used in writing than in speaking. They are "special-occasion" words, as it were. Compare these pairs of formal and informal words: *an oration/a talk, erudite/smart, vivacious/lively.*

Technical words are learned from specialized education and occur most often in both the speech and the writing of experts in a particular field. These words and expressions have no synonyms; they are therefore essential for discussing ideas within the field. Examples of technical words and expressions from the field of statistics are *mean, median, mode, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation;* from the field of music, *descant, diatonic interval,* and *baritone;* from the field of literature, *caesura, metaphor,* and *spondee;* from the field of publication, *folio, quarto,* and *copyright.* We learn technical words whenever we enter any specialized area of knowledge.

The fourth dimension of American English usage is the dimension of *time.* This dimension is intrinsic both personally and historically. That is, children speak and write differently from their elders, and we speak and write differently from the Pilgrim Fathers. Language changes through time. For example, quite recently such words as *penicillin, retrorocket,* and *television* were highly technical. Today they are in everybody's vocabulary. The time dimension of American English usage is clearly demonstrated also by slang, one kind of very informal language. Its wild, colorful, often violent nature gives it one of two temporal fates: a quick death from overuse or a permanent place in the vocabulary of English.

The dimension of *place* is massively documented by the Linguistic Atlas of the United States. Its evidence has been collected over the past three decades by linguists called linguistic geographers, dialect geographers, or dialectologists. In their words, the term *dialect* has no derogatory or disparaging connotations. Dialect means simply a variety of speech that is used in a certain locality or region and that differs in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar from other varieties in other localities and regions.

Linguistic Atlas research has revealed three major dialect areas stretching from east to west across the United States: the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern. Dialects are most clearly marked on the Atlantic Coast, where they reflect the original homes in England of the earliest settlers. Later, as the colonists and pioneers migrated westward, they took their dialects with them. Therefore we find Northern usages in Michigan, Midland usages in Indiana, and Southern usages in Texas. The farther west we go, the more the dialects blend and mingle, reflecting migration routes and settlement areas. In California, the dialect mixture is further complicated by the Spanish substratum. There we find all the Eastern dialects but only their most widespread usages. If a word occurs in only a small area in the East, it will not be present in California. It seems almost as if only the strongest words, like the strongest men, could survive the long trek across the continent.

As we have said, dialects differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. An example of each kind of difference may be enlightening. One pronunciation difference, for instance, is the "intrusive *r*" that appears in *wash* and *Washington* in Indiana and Missouri. Vocabulary variety may be illustrated by the many synonyms for the word *relatives: folks, people, kinfolk, folkses, homefolks, relations,* and *kinnery.* A grammar difference, for example, is the preference for *he don't* rather than *he doesn't* in North Carolina speech. Americans generally tend to be puzzled by pronunciation differences, delighted by vocabulary differences, and repelled by grammar differences. These emotional reactions are quite interesting to the student of American English usage, especially when they reveal the "halo effect" of one's own native dialect.

The Atlas further reveals that the English spoken in a large city influences the speech of its surroundings. For instance, the Boston name for soda water is *tonic.* This word is heard on Cape Cod and in Nantucket to the south, and north into New Hampshire and along the coast of Maine, but not in Rhode Island and in the cities on the Connecticut River. Actually, the prestige of a large city, which is also usually a center of culture, business, and wealth, can be measured by how far its distinctive usages penetrate into its immediate environment. In this connection, however, it is well to remember that the Atlas interviewing began in the 1930's before radio and television overcame isolation. Few communities are isolated today in the same sense that they were thirty years ago. Indeed new interviews are now under way in New England to determine dialect changes since the original interviews of the 1930's.

Let us summarize. A comprehensive perspective on American English usage today is properly five-dimensional. In other words, either standard or nonstandard forms may be used in formal, informal, or technical situations, transmitted by either speech or writing used by either young or old persons in either isolated rural areas or urban centers of culture, in the Northern, or the Midland, or the Southern dialect areas.

This five-dimensional perspective can define the facts of American English usage, but its very complexity has caused what Leonard Bloomfield called "secondary and tertiary responses to language." Secondary responses to language are pronouncements that certain usages are "mistakes," "bad grammar," or "not English." Such pronouncements generally reflect the folklore that we have inherited from the eighteenth century grammarians who wanted to make English be Latin. This folklore assumes that there are certain logical and conventional rules of usage that all educated persons must obey if they are to speak correctly. Bloomfield's description of the person giving tongue to a secondary response is delightful.

> The speaker, when making the secondary response, shows alertness. His eyes are bright, and he seems to be enjoying himself. No matter how closely his statement adheres to tradition, he proffers it as something new, often as his own observation or as that of some acquaintance, and he is likely to describe it as interesting. If he knows that he is talking to a professional student of language, he first alleges ignorance and alludes modestly to the status of his own speech, and then advances the traditional lore in a fully authoritative tone. The whole process is, as we say, pleasurable.[2]

If a linguist, confronted by a secondary response to language, rashly tries to inform the speaker of the facts of usage, he almost always receives a tertiary response to language in return. A tertiary response is hostile and scornful. The speaker may assert that the linguist is stating merely his own perverse personal preferences. If the linguist cites research to support his statements, the speaker may assert that the scholarship is interesting but that his secondary response is still right. Or he may accuse the linguist of advocating the use of nonstandard forms or of wanting to destroy our literary heritage. Some clear-cut examples of secondary and tertiary responses to language have been written by certain recent reviewers of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Many of these reviews have been gathered by James Sledd and are published in his casebook *Dictionaries and That Dictionary*,[3] along with scholarly answers to them.

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[2] "Secondary and Tertiary Responses to Language," *Language*, 20 (April-June 1944), 45-55. Reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 279.

[3] (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1962).

The folklore on which secondary responses to language are based has been handed down to us by grammar book writers for two hundred years. My study of grammar textbooks which had been published between 1940 and 1955 for grades three, six, eight, eleven, and thirteen compared their statements with Linguistic Atlas facts on fifty-seven controversial usage items.[4] This study revealed much about connections between the facts and the folklore of American English usage.

For example, the textbooks stated variously that the use of *hadn't ought* or *had ought* was wrong, nonstandard, redundant, vulgate, unnecessary, colloquial, provincial, an illiteracy, a vulgarism, a barbarism, or a gross error. The Linguistic Atlas evidence shows that both these usages are regional. *Hadn't ought* is a Northern form, which occurs also in the Midland in Ohio because New Englanders settled in the Western Reserve and Marietta area. In these places, speakers of all educational levels say *hadn't ought. Had ought,* on the other hand, occurs much less frequently in these same localities but only in the speech of the uneducated informants. Comparing these two analyses, we see that the textbooks used a wide variety of labels, all of which agreed with each other that both usages were to be heartily and equally condemned. Contrariwise, the Atlas recorded the geographic and educational facts without making any value judgment on them.

The use of *he don't* for *he doesn't* is another problem which was regularly discussed in the textbooks. They stated variously that this usage was an error, a vulgarism, nonstandard or vulgate usage, or "as careless as going to a party with a soiled blouse or a dirty neck." The Linguistic Atlas reveals that *he don't* occurs in the speech of about 75 percent of the educated speakers in the Middle Atlantic States and in the speech of about half of the educated informants in the South Atlantic States. In the Middlewest also many college graduates say *he don't* but in this part of the country this usage becomes more frequent in direct ratio to lack of education, social status, and economic advantage. Consequently in the Middlewest, *he don't* lacks the social acceptability that it has in the Middle and South Atlantic States.

A third and final example from many possibilities is the use of *it's me* instead of *it's I*. The large majority of textbooks stated that the nominative case follows the verb *to be*. Although many of them recognized that this "rule" is often broken, they regularly insisted with varying degrees of prescriptiveness that it should be obeyed. The Atlas shows that *it's me* and *it wasn't me* are commonly and consistently used by educated and uneducated speakers everywhere. Moreover, the majority of speakers tend to be consistent in using *him, her,* and *them* instead of *he, she,* and *they* in the same contexts.

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[4] "A Study of the Validity of Textbook Statements about Certain Controversial Items in the Light of Evidence from the Linguistic Atlas" (Unpub. diss., University of Minnesota, 1958).

Much as we may respect the facts and deplore the folklore of usage, the power of the folklore cannot be denied or discounted. People do indeed have strong opinions about usage, and often the folklore is more prestigious than the facts. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* is careful to inform us about points of friction between facts and folklore, and the Atlas investigators often added marginal comments in their field records which testify to the power of the folklore of American English usage.

For example, a farmer and teamster in Farmington, Connecticut, a Type I or uneducated informant, aged forty-seven, is quoted as saying "At school, whenever I used *me,* the teacher would say 'Who is me?' And then I'd change it quick." The fieldworker then notes, "As a result, he is self-conscious and timid about *me* and other pronouns in this context, and avoids them when he can." Another Type I informant, a spinster of seventy-four, in Providence, Rhode Island, said, "*It's me* isn't right. I use it only when I don't think." A Type II informant, in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, a carpenter and town officer, active politically and interested in the Atlas work, said *it's I* "when I'm on my good behavior." A Type III informant in Boston, a cultured and widely traveled lady of forty-six, used *it's I, it's him, it's her,* and *it's them.* The fieldworker made this marginal note in the record: "Informant is aware of her inconsistent usage but is not troubled by it."

From these comments and many others like them in the Atlas records, we know that the teaching of American English usage often has surprising results. We may even suspect that the greater the education, the less attention paid to the folklore of usage. The Farmington farmer and the Providence spinster, speakers of eighth grade education, were convinced of the truth of the folklore. The farmer had even developed self-consciousness and avoidance reactions because of the strength of his conviction. The Old Saybrook carpenter and town officer, a speaker of high school education, had a more relaxed attitude. Apparently he was convinced that the folklore was a "good" thing, but he obeyed it only when he chose to do so. The educated lady from Boston set her own patterns quite independently, matching the folklore in the first person but calmly and knowingly disregarding it in the third.

Such interesting reactions illuminate the English teacher's dilemma. Society sees us as arbiters of usage. Outside our classrooms we are constantly expected to give fast, easy answers to questions such as, "It's wrong to say, 'Winstons taste good like a cigarette should,' isn't it?" As educated persons we know that complicated questions do not have simple answers. As English teachers we know that all questions about American English usage are complicated. Moreover, we have a scholarly attitude toward modern research. We wish to use it in our classrooms whenever it can help our students learn. Our first step toward this goal is encouraging our students to ask proper questions. The asking of intelligent questions about American English usage produces discussion, not arbitrary "Yes-No" judgments. Discussion explores the five dimensions of the problem. Exploration reveals the fascinations of the field. Then, finally, language learning begins.

Usage

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE

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That the doctrine of usage is of respectable antiquity, the well known passage in Horace's *Art of Poetry* will attest:

> *Multa renascentur quae iam cecidere, cadentque*
> Many [expressions] will be born again which now have
> perished, and [many] will perish
>
> *Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,*
> which now are respected expressions, if usage wills it,
>
> *Quem penes arbitrium est et ius et norma loquendi.*
> in whose power is the determination, the law, and the
> standard of discourse.
>
> *De Arte Poetica*, 70-72
> *The Art of Poetry*, 70-72

That even in his time it was not universally accepted is evident not only from the fact that Horace felt compelled to state the principle but from the reiteration of it by other writers. Quintilian's statement is much longer because he is fully aware that there are different usages. He agrees that:

> [p.112] *Consuetudo vero certissima loquendi magistra, utendumque plane sermone ut nummo, cui publica forma est.*
>
> Usage however is the surest pilot in speaking, and we should treat language as currency minted with the public stamp.

Then he adds:

> [p.112] *Omnia tamen haec exigunt acre iudicium, . . .* But in all cases we have need of a critical judgment, . . .

And later on he concludes:

> [p.132] *Ergo consuetudinem sermonis vocabo consensum eruditorum, sicut vivendi consensum bonorum.* I will therefore define usage in speech as the agreed practice of educated men, just as where our way of life is concerned I should define it as the agreed practice of all good men.

Here we are at the root of the problem. Language is, to be sure, "currency minted with the public stamp" and usage "is the determination, the law, and the standard of discourse." But there are, alas, different varieties of the language, different usages; therefore different standards of discourse, different currencies. So we are compelled to make a choice, a choice which Quintilian tells us how to make: we follow "the agreed practice of educated men." All we have to do then is to decide who the educated men are, discover what their agreed practice is, and learn to follow it. Those are hard things to do, and for more than a thousand years—say from A. D. 500 to 1600, Western men were not called upon to do it in their native languages.

During that long period the living vernacular languages were not very respectable. Everybody used them, and most verbal social intercourse was carried on in them. But it was in a dead language that matters deemed really important were discussed and written, a language for which no questions of varying standards had to be faced because it seemed to be a fixed and immutable thing as presented in the Latin grammar texts. Since these Latin grammars were the educational foundation of many generations of speakers of English, their influence on our attitudes toward language has been tremendous.

Everyone in the academic discipline of English has had it impressed on him that Latin grammar was a bad model for the construction of an English grammar; and that many of our prescriptive and puristic notions about English stem from the misalliance of Latin grammar and the English language. The point has been much insisted on, and rightly, of course. So much insisted on, in fact that it seems strange that the prescriptive approach to English survives so robustly, little affected by a half century of descriptionism in some of our graduate schools. Many of our college composition texts, to be sure, approach language differently from those of fifty years ago; a few approach it very differently. But the Latinate approach is still common even in college, general in high school, and almost universal in the grades.

The extraordinary tenacity of this false approach to English has, I believe, had a seriously stultifying effect on our capacity for verbal expression. I begin by trying to define more precisely what attitudes are to be discussed. A quotation from the article on grammar in Pauly-Wissowa's monumental encyclopedia of the ancient world may serve as a point of departure. Rather freely translated, it amounts to this: "Today we find it hard to imagine an advanced culture distinguished by the finest literary creations, which possessed neither an established grammatical terminology nor a systematic description of the forms of its language."

The author of this statement was addressing himself mainly to those students of the classics for whom the encyclopedia was compiled. The advanced culture he was referring to was that of ancient Greece during the periods of its greatest flowering, from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C. Greek grammar was not invented until about two centuries after that period; hence the allusion to the absence of an established grammatical terminology and a systematic formal description of the language. Implicit in the quoted statement is the author's awareness that most of his readers tacitly assume that no great literature can possibly be written except on the solid foundation of a grammar that the literary artist is consciously aware of.

That attitude seems still to be strong among us. And no wonder. It has been drilled into us and into our ancestors for well over a thousand years—not explicitly, but as an inescapable inference from the kind of instruction the students got.

Latin was, as you know, the language of university instruction all over the Western world until not much more than two centuries ago. The first duty of the lower schools was, therefore, to give the student a thorough grounding in Latin. In the earlier Middle Ages he had to have Latin if he were to read at all, at least in some European countries, because there was virtually no written vernacular literature. In the later Middle Ages important vernacular writings appeared, but rarely of a learned kind. And as late as 1637 Descartes is at pains to explain why he first published his *Discourse on Method* in French. Spinoza and Newton, later in the seventeenth century, did not follow Descartes' example but wrote their major works in Latin.

Only in the mid-eighteenth century did the vernacular become the language of university instruction, and even then the professional faculties accepted it more slowly than did the arts faculty (d'Irsay, v. 2, u. 125). But the abandonment of Latin as the language of university instruction did not, of course, mean that it was no longer taught, though it would come to mean that it was no longer necessary to learn it. In the state of Ohio today there is more Latin taught in the high schools than all the other foreign languages combined. I'm afraid, however, that there is very little Latin learned there. The medieval student did not require an explanation of why he should learn Latin. It was apparent that without it he was virtually illiterate. Even the late eighteenth century university student could see clearly the need for Latin because much of what he had to read was still in

Latin. So for many centuries the teacher of Latin found it no more necessary to justify his discipline than do our present-day teachers of reading to justify theirs. The original justification for studying Latin is now gone; new reasons have therefore been adduced for keeping it in the school curriculum, the least of which seems to be that there is value in knowing Latin.

What high school students do seem to carry away from their brush with Latin is vague conviction that it is a superior, logical language to which English owes whatever of merit it may possess; some even believe English to be a degenerate derivative of Latin, arriving at this conclusion, I suppose, from being told that a large proportion of the English vocabulary is Latin in origin. Particularly do they insist that whatever they know of English grammar they learned in their Latin class. This notion of English grammar is one of parsing, of making that analysis of a sentence which is the necessary preliminary to diagraming. With such a background the attitude referred to in Pauly-Wissowa is only too likely to be reinforced.

But by no means all students and teachers in our present educational system are directly exposed to instruction in Latin. The attitude has deeper roots and must be traced back to the Middle Ages. To do this requires a brief examination of its foundations in the ancient world.

First a few dates are pertinent. The great names in Greek literature are all earlier than the third century B.C.:

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, eighth or ninth century;
Aeschylus (525-456), Sophocles (495-406), and Euripedes (480-406), fifth century;
Aristophanes (?450-?380), late fifth and early fourth;
Herodotus (c.484-c.424) and Thucydides (471-401), fifth;
Plato (c.427-347) and Aristotle (384-322), fourth.

Then not much before the first century B.C. came the little *Techne* of Dionysius Thrax, the first still extant grammar in Western civilization. Many earlier Greek writers, particularly the philosophers, had dealt with language, and the rhetoricians had dealt with it systematically. But not until Dionysius do we find an attempt at an analysis of its structure. No doubt there had been earlier grammarians, especially among the Stoics, and probably Dionysius's work was the culmination of a tradition extending back for several decades, but certainly not far enough to have provided any grammatical information to the writers of the great period. We must agree, then, with the writer of the encyclopedia article, that Greek literature, one of the greatest in the Western world, was produced by writers quite innocent of grammar in its usual present sense.

With the Romans the situation is somewhat altered. Their great writers did know grammar. Caesar wrote a work on a grammatical subject, and Virgil exchanged dedications with the grammarian Varro. But their interest in grammar was the same as that of the Alexandrian Greeks. It was philosophical. They did not use it either to learn another language or to achieve correctness in their own.

The new situation among the Romans is the bilingual one. A cultivated Greek cared for no language but his own, and probably rarely knew any other. The cultivated Roman knew Greek, knew it about as well as he did Latin. Caesar's dying words were not those that Shakespeare puts in his mouth, but were uttered in Greek, or at least Suetonius reports this, thereby suggesting how easily the Greek came to him (Suetonius, *Caius Julius Caesar,* par. 82). The Roman learned Greek from his pedagogue, the boy's guide. He learned it by having it spoken to him, not through any formal grammatical instruction. In Rome, then, for the first time in Western civilization, the familiar pattern of a culturally significant second language emerges.

The Greeks were unique in having developed their culture without the aid of another cultural heritage communicated to them through the foreign language of the other culture. Or if this did happen (and it probably did), the Greeks of the classical age were not aware of it. Starting with the Roman, every Western culture has derived much from a written heritage transmitted in a foreign language. The Romans had to learn only one—Greek. Later cultures have had to learn several.

This kind of situation breeds an attitude toward one's own language which the Greeks never had. To them there was only one civilized language—their own. To the Romans the literature and language of Greece were at first so obviously superior to their own that they felt compelled to imitate the Greek masterpieces. Their first classic, the *Annales* of Ennius, (239-?169 B.C.), was written in imitation of Homer to provide the Romans with an epic which could be studied in the manner of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* Of its eighteen books only fragments totaling less than 600 lines survive, from which we may conclude that the Roman students did not find it as rewarding as the Greek students found Homer. By the time their great writers came along, the conviction of the inferiority of their own literature must have been pretty well established among the Romans.

The imitation of Greek grammar by the Roman grammarians was more slavish than the imitations in literature. Plautus and Terence and Ennius translated Greek plays, but in doing so adapted them freely. When Greek grammar was transferred to Latin the Roman grammarians followed their models so closely that they had to find an article for Latin, forcing *hic* to perform that function. They mistranslated γενικη πτωσις as (*genike ptosis*) as *casus genitivus,* missing not only the sense of γενικη (*genike*) but also of πτωσις (*ptosis*) for in Greek the phrase means the generic or general case. Most significant, however, for later developments in the Western grammatical tradition, was their tacit assumption that the formal description of one language could be satisfactorily applied to another. The same procedure was followed many centuries later when the Latinized pattern of Greek grammar was imposed on the Indo-European vernaculars of Western Europe and even on non-Indo-European languages.

Educated men in the Middle Ages were, like the Romans, bilingual. But their linguistic situation was in some important ways quite different from the Roman one. Rome ultimately possessed a great literature of its own, which could stand comparison with the older Greek. The language of that literature, if more elaborate and archaic than the vulgar dialect, was at least a living thing whose oral effect was of primary importance to the literary artist. And because it was a living language it was learned as living languages normally are, by the unconscious imitation of older speakers of it—not out of grammars.

The literate medieval European, except in those areas where Teutonic dialects were native, had no important written vernacular literature. His first language was therefore mainly a spoken one. Latin, his second language, he could not learn, as the educated Roman had learned Greek, from a native speaker, for there were no longer any native speakers of Latin. Latin had become a dead language, and he had to learn it from a grammar.

This point must be insisted on. A dead language is one which is no longer the first language of living people. Since no one speaks it natively there is no one who can be appealed to for a decision on what is linguistically possible in the language and what is not. An American student of French when puzzled as to whether a phrase he has constructed is genuinely French or merely a literal translation from English, can always appeal to a live Frenchman and get a definitive answer. But in the Middle Ages there were no live Romans left, and all the student could do was to consult his grammar. The grammars of Latin and ancient Greek were therefore magnified into final authorities.

Of course these grammars were based on what was originally simply an attempt to describe systematically the language used in literature. But the medieval student did not realize this. In any case he would not have had access to a sufficient body of classical literature to permit him to verify the generalizations of the grammars even if his control of the language had been good enough to enable him to make such a study. Besides, the standard grammars of Donatus and Priscian had been handed down as canonical texts along with the secular and sacred texts which he studied. In the Middle Ages the authority of grammar became supreme, and its reign was to be a long one.

While Latin remained the language of learning and scholarly instruction for well over a thousand years, the language of literature was mainly the vernacular. In northern Europe, literatures in the Teutonic dialects flourished from the eighth century on, while further south the vernacular literatures got started somewhat later. Early in the fourteenth century Dante, in *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (1304?) argued the merits of Italian as a literary vehicle, though his plea was made in Latin. Two centuries and a half later du Bellay did the same thing for French in his *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française* (1549), and a few years afterward Ascham came to the defense of English in his *Scholemaster* (1570). These last two defenders of the vernacular defended it in the vernacular. But despite these and other eloquent pleas, which were so overwhelmingly justified by matchless achievements in literature, Latin continued to be the language of the schools and of learning, and with the study of it went the necessary emphasis on the study of grammar.

The increasing importance of the vernacular did, however, serve to direct the attention of some pedants to the fact that there were no grammars of the vernacular, so they proceeded to supply them. The method was the same one which the Romans used: take the grammar of the culturally superior language and try to force your own language into it. As the Roman grammars forced Latin into the patterns of Greek grammar, so the English grammars forced English into the patterns of the Latin grammar which the Romans had devised by forcing Latin into the patterns of Greek. An example or two from Ben Jonson's *English Grammar* (first printed in 1640) will show how this was done.

Since Latin had several noun declensions, Jonson tries to find parallel paradigms in English. His first declension is easy enough: ". . . the first maketh the Plurall of the Singular, by adding there unto *s*. . . ." (ch. xiii). After that he can find only enough material for a second declension, the definition of which contains a nice example of understatement: "The second Declension formeth the Plurall from the Singular, by putting to *n.* which notwithstanding it have not so many Nounes, as hath the former, yet lacketh not his difficultie, by reason of sundry exceptions, that cannot easily be reduced to one generall head." (Ch. xiii) The only nouns he can find which fit his definition are "*Oxe, Oxen. Hose, Hosen.*" The exceptions are *man, men; woman, women; brother, brethren; child, children; cow, kine* or *keene;* and as exceptions to both declensions, *house, houses, housen; eye, eyes, eyen; shoo, shooes, shooen.* Time has still further attenuated this declension, *hose, brother, cow, house, eye,* and *shoe* having moved into his first declension. He does not seize upon the rather numerous nouns like *sheep,* which have no plural ending, to make a third declension, nor on the small number with umlaut like *goose, geese* to form a fourth.

Prescription is not yet as strong in Jonson as it will be in later English grammarians, but the urge is already there, as well as the fondness for inflection which long association with the highly inflected Latin and Greek had bred in him. Writing of the verb, he remarks that

> . . . persons Plurall, keepe the termination of the first person Singular. In former times, till about the reigne of King Henry the eighth, they were wont to be formed, by adding *en:* thus, *Loven, sayen, complainen.* But now (whatsoever is the cause) it hath quite grown out of use, and that other so generally prevailed, that I dare not presume to set this a-foot againe. Albeit (to tell you my opinion) I am perswaded, that the lacke hereof, well considered, will be found a great blemish to our tongue. For, seeing time, and person be, as it were, the right, and left hand of a Verbe; what can the mayming bring else, but a lamenesse to the whole body? (Ch. xvi)

Jonson believes that grammar is useful not only to a foreigner learning English but also to a native speaker:

> The profit of *Grammar* is great to Strangers, who are to live in communion, and commerce with us; and, it is honourable to our selves. For, by it we communicate all our labours, studies, profits, without an Interpreter.
>
> Wee free our Language from the opinion of Rudenesse, and Barbarisme, wherewith it is mistaken to be diseas'd; We shew the Copie of it, and Matchablenesse, with other tongues; we ripen the wits of our owne Children, and Youth sooner by it, and advance their knowledge. (The Preface)

In Jonson we find an early, tentative, and cautious expression of the attitude which is later to become so dogmatic. The early pages of his grammar alternate Latin and English: on one page are his definitions in English, on the facing page supporting evidence in Latin. And in the second book, on syntax, there is constant comparison with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, though apparently with no invidious intention. Later grammarians have no doubt as to the superiority of the classical model, as witness one of their prohibitions which is still to be found in high school texts, the prohibition of the preposition at the end of the construction, a rule based on analogy with Latin.

Alongside this attitude which Jonson exemplifies is a contrary one for which Sir Philip Sidney is an early spokesman. Towards the end of the *Apologie* (after 1580; 1583) we read:

> But what? me thinkes I deserve to be pounded, for straying from Poetrie to Oratorie: but both have such an affinity in this wordish consideration, that I thinke this degression, will make my meaning receive the fuller understanding: which is not to take upon me to teach Poets howe they should doe, but onely finding my selfe sick among the rest, to shewe some one or two spots of the common infection, growne among the most part of Writers: that acknowledging our selves some-what awry, we may bend to the right use both of matter and manner; whereto our language gyveth us great occasion, beeing indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it. I know, some will say it is a mingled language. And why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say it wanteth Grammer. Nay truly, it hath that prayse, that it wanteth not Grammer: for Grammer it might have, but it needes it not; beeing so easie of it selfe, and so voyd of those cumbersome differences of Cases, Genders, Moodes, and Tenses, which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of Babilons curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother-tongue. But for the uttering sweetly, and properly the conceits of the minde, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world: and is particulerly happy, in compositions of two or three words together, neere the Greeke, far beyond the Latine: which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

Notice that whereas Jonson deplores the lack of inflectional endings—in the quoted passage he refers to the loss of *en* as the sign of the plural in verbs—Spenser considers . . . "the cumbersone differences of

Cases, Genders, Moodes, and Tenses . . . a peece of the Tower of Babilons curse. . . ."

Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, these opposed attitudes, sometimes strangely intermixed, appear again and again in print and may therefore be assumed to have been read. A few of the more striking examples will have to suffice as illustration. The supporters of Sidney are in the minority, and obviously not very influential, but among them are some familiar names.

From John Wallis's *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae,* 1653, come these statements, originally in Latin:

> I am not ignorant of the fact that others before me have attempted to produce a Grammar of English and have not merited contempt, especially DrGill in Latin, Benjamin Johnson [sic] in English. . . . But none of them, in my opinion, proceeded on the way which is most suitable to the undertaking; for all of them have forced our tongue too much into the pattern of Latin (an error shared by nearly all teachers of other modern languages) and so have taught many useless things about the cases of Nouns, Genders and Declensions, and about the tenses, Moods, and Conjugations of Verbs, about the government of nouns and verbs, etc., matters absolutely foreign to our language, producing confusion and obscurity rather than serving as explanations: (Tucker, p. 36)

A more forthright statement comes from Archibald Campbell in his *Lexiphanes,* 1767:

> There has been much talk about correcting, improving and ascertaining a living tongue, as well in our own country, as among the French and Italians. Many great writers, and if I mistake not, Doctor Swift among the rest, have thought a Grammar and Dictionary necessary for that purpose, and have therefore lamented the want of them . . . 'Tis certain that a Grammar or Dictionary, if good for anything, must be compiled or extracted from good authors; but that these again should become necessary, and even indispensible to form, or rather to create good authors, appears to me, I confess, something like a circle in logic, or the perpetual motion in mechanicks; the one a vicious mode of reasoning, and the other a downright impossibility. 'Tis true, they may be useful to ladies or country squires, to avoid an error in spelling, and now and then a gross blunder or impropriety in speech. And farther I conceive their utility, however boasted of, does not extend; unless, indeed, in a dead language, or to a

> foreigner who studies a living one, in the same manner we are obliged to study Greek or Latin. But an author or an orator, who takes upon him to write or speak to the people in their own tongue, ought to be above consulting them. [Experience and history show that] as the want of them has been no loss, so when procured, they have done as little service. Homer and Virgil, Demosthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, all wrote without Grammar or Dictionary, and most of them without so much as knowing what they were. So have all the best writers of Italy, France, and England. Nor do I hear that the Dictionaries of the two former . . . have done any mighty feats . . . that they have fixed or established their respective languages, or made the writers in either a whit more elegant and correct than they would have been without them. (Tucker, p. 112)

And from our own country Benjamin Franklin comments gently, Noah Webster with some asperity. In a letter to a lady, 1768, discussing spelling reform, Franklin refers to etymologies as follows:

> Etymologies are at present very uncertain; but such as they are, the old books would still preserve them, and etymologists would there find them. Words in the course of time, change their meanings, as well as their spelling and pronunciation, and we do not look to etymology for their present meanings. If I should call a man Knave and a Villain, he would hardly be satisfied with my telling him, that one of these words originally signified only a lad or servant; and the other, an under plowman or the inhabitant of a village. It is from present usage only, the meaning of words is to be determined. (Tucker, p. 115)

Evidently he disagrees with Addison, who had remarked in *The Spectator,* No. 135 "that some of our celebrated authors . . . began to prune their words of all superfluous letters . . . in order to adjust the spelling to the pronunciation; which would have confounded all our etymologies, and have quite destroyed our language."

Webster, whose ideas on language Franklin approved of (letter to Noah Webster, June 18, 1786) about twenty years later in his *Dissertations on the English Language* . . . 1789, makes specific attacks:

> . . . Our modern grammars have done much more hurt than good. The authors have labored to prove, what is obviously absurd, viz. that our language is not made right; and in pursuance of this idea, have tried to make it over again, and persuade the English to speak by Latin rules,

> or by arbitrary rules of their own. Hence they have rejected many phrases of pure English, and substituted those which are neither English nor sense. Writers and Grammarians have attempted for centuries to introduce a subjunctive mode into English, yet without effect; the language requires none. . . . (p. vii)
>
> In books, *you* is commonly used with the plural of the verb *be*, *you were*; in conversation, it is generally followed by the singular *you was*. Notwithstanding the criticisms of grammarians, the antiquity and universality of this practice must give it the sanction of propriety; for what but practice forms a language? This practice is not merely vulgar; it is general among men of erudition who do not affect to be fettered by the rules of grammarians, and some late writers have indulged it in their publications. (pp. 233-4)
>
> "Who do you speak to?" "Who did he marry?" are challenged as bad English; but whom do you speak to? was never used in speaking, as I can find and if so, is hardly English at all. There is no doubt, in my mind, that the English *who* and the Latin *qui*, are the same word with mere variations of dialect. . . . Nay, it is more than probable that *who* was once wholly used in asking questions, even in the case; *who* did he marry? until some Latin student began to suspect it bad English, because not agreeable to the Latin rules. At any rate, *whom* do you speak of? is a corruption, and all the grammars that can be formed will not extend the use of the phrase beyond the walls of a college. (pp. 286-7)

This last remark of Webster's echoes that of Wallis more than a century earlier:

> I should not wish you to expect that everything in our Language should correspond exactly to Latin. For in this as in nearly all modern tongues, there is a great difference from the syntax of Greek and Latin (arising mainly because we do not recognize differences of cases). The few who do pay attention to them undertake more labour than the subject is worth. (Tucker, p. 39)

From the nineteenth century I cite two examples, the first from the reformer, William Cobbett, published in 1818:

> In the Latin language, the Verbs change their endings so as *to include in the* Verbs themselves what we

> express by our auxiliary verb *to have*. And they have as many changes, or different endings, as are required to express all those various circumstances of the time that [which] we express by, *work, worked, shall work, may work, might work, have worked, had worked, shall have worked, may have worked, might have worked*; and so on. It is, therefore, necessary for the Latins to have distinct appellations to suit these various circumstances of time, or states of an action; but, such distinction of appellations can be of no use to us. . . .
>
> Why, then, should we perplex ourselves with a multitude of artificial distinctions, which [that] cannot, by any possibility, be of any use in practice? These distinctions have been introduced from this cause: those who [that] have written English Grammars, have been taught Latin; and, either unable to divest themselves of their Latin rules, or unwilling to treat with simplicity that [that] which if made somewhat of a mystery, would make them appear more *learned* than the mass of the people, they have endeavoured to make our simple language turn and twist itself so as to become as complex in its principles as the Latin language is. (*English Grammar*, pp. 147-8)

(The edition of Cobbett's work from which I quote was edited by Alfred Ayres in 1883. The first sentence of the editor's note reads: "Cobbett's Grammar is probably the most readable grammar ever written." Yet Ayres finds it necessary to correct, in brackets, several of Cobbett's relative pronouns.)

The other is from Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, and shows a rather ambivalent attitude to grammar:

> But for freedom, for brevity and for vigour, Elizabethan is superior to modern English. Many of the words employed by Shakespeare and his contemporaries were the recent inventions of the age; hence they were used with a freshness and exactness to which we are strangers. Again, the spoken English so far predominated over the grammatical English that it materially influenced the rhythm of the verse, the construction of the sentence, and even sometimes the spelling of words. Hence sprung an artless and unlaboured harmony which seems the natural heritage of Elizabethan poets, whereas such harmony as is attained by modern authors frequently betrays a painful excess of art. Lastly, the use of some few still remaining inflections (the subjunctive in particular) the lingering sense of many other inflections that had passed away leaving behind something of the old versatility and au-

> dacity in the arrangement of the sentence, the stern subordination of grammar to terseness and clearness, and the consequent directness and naturalness of expression, all conspire to give a liveliness and wakefulness to Shakespearian English which are wanting in the grammatical monotony of the present day. We may perhaps claim some superiority in completeness and perspicuity for modern English, but if we were to appeal on this ground to the shade of Shakespeare in the words of Antonio in the *Tempest*,—"Do you not hear us speak?" we might fairly be crushed with the reply of Sebastian—"I do; and surely/ It is a sleepy language." (From Introduction, p. 16)

The prescriptive attitude is stated in the preface of virtually every English grammar published from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century. Only a few of the more extravagant examples will therefore be given. First one from a later seventeenth century grammar, Christopher Cooper's *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae,* 1685:

> Grammar is the rule and foundation of speech, which is the channel of all arts and sciences, of Religion and Law, the picture of the spirit, the bond of society; by the use of reason and speech, men are distinguished from beasts without intelligence. It is enough for ordinary people to be instructed how to express their thoughts to be understood by others; but the learned ought to speak and write aptly and elegantly; and that is what grammar teaches; which makes clear the system and analogy of every vernacular, and having been spread through various nations, preserves it for ever from the injury of time. It purifies it of errors of speech and barbarism: it puts to flight difficulties which at first seem insuperable; for when the rules of Grammar are skilfully taught, any language can be more easily understood, more surely learnt, and longer kept in the memory. (Tucker, p. 54)

The next is a century later, from Lord Monboddo's *The Origin and Progress of Language*:

> . . . a language of art not only could not have been invented by the people, but . . . it cannot be preserved among them, without the particular care and attention of those men of art we call grammarians; whom we may despise as much as we please; but if there be not such a set of men in every country, to guard against the abuses and corruptions which popular use will necessarily intro-

> duce into every language; and if the youth of rank and fortune in the country, are not carefully instructed by such men in the principles of grammar; the language of that country, however perfect it may have been originally, will very soon become unlearned and barbarous. It is chiefly by such neglect that all the present languages of Europe are become corrupt dialects of languages that were originally good. . . . (Tucker, p. 118)

Perhaps the ultimate in pedantic arrogance is a note from Goold Brown's immense *Grammar of English Grammars,* 1851. Brown was an American who after having made enough money from writing school grammars had indulged himself by going through 463 grammars and 85 other books mainly to prove that they were wrong and he was right. In Part III, Chapter XIII, Critical Note XVI to the General Rule of Syntax, Footnote I, he writes (I quote less than half the note):

> Another example, in several respects still more remarkable,—a shorter one, into which an equally successful professor of grammar has condensed a much greater number and variety of faults,—is seen in the following citation: "The verb is so called, because it means *word*; and as there can be no sentence without it, it is called emphatically, *the word.*"—*Pinneo's* * *Analytical Gram.*, p. 14. This sentence, in which, perhaps, most readers will discover no error, has in fact faults of so many different kinds, that a critic must pause to determine under which of more than half a dozen different heads of false syntax it might most fitly be presented for correction or criticism. (1.) It might be set down under my Note 5th to Rule 10th; for, in one or two instances out of the three, if not in all, the pronoun "it" gives not the same idea as its antecedent. The faults coming under this head might be obviated by three changes, made thus: "The verb is so called, because verb means *word*; and, as there can be no sentence without *a verb, this part of speech* is called, emphatically, *the word.*" Cobbett wisely says, "Never put an *it* upon paper without thinking well of what you are about"—E. Gram., ¶ 196. But (2) the erroneous text, and this partial correction of it too, might be put under my Critical Note 5th, among *Falsities*; for, in either form, each member affirms what is manifestly untrue. The term "*word*" has many meanings; but no usage ever makes it, "*emphatically*" or otherwise, a name for one of the classes called "parts of speech;" nor is there nowadays any current usage in which "*verb* means word." (3) This text

> might be put under Critical Note 6th, among Absurdities; for whoever will read it, as in fairness he should, taking the pronoun "*it*" in the exact sense of its antecedent "*the verb*," will see that the import of each part is absurd—the whole, a two-fold absurdity. (4.) It might be put under Critical Note 7th, among *Self-Contradictions*; for, to teach at once that "*the verb* is so called," and "is called, emphatically," *otherwise*,—namely, "*the word*,"—is, to contradict one's self. (5.) It might be set down under Critical Note 9th, among examples of *Words Needless*; for the author's question is, "Why is the verb so called?" and this may be much better answered in fewer words, thus: "The verb is so called, because in French it is called *le verbe*, and in Latin, *verbum*, which means *word*." (6.) It might be put under Critical Note 10th, as in example of Improper Omissions; for it may be greatly bettered by the addition of some words, thus: "The verb is so called, because [in French] it [is called *le verbe*, and in Latin, *verbum*, which] means *word*: as there can be no sentence without a verb, *this* [most important part of speech] is called, emphatically, [*the verb*, q.d.,] *the word*." (7.) It might be put under Critical Note 11th, among *Literary Blunders;* for there is at least one blunder in each of its members. (8.) It might be set down under Critical Note 13th, as an example of Awkwardness; for it is but clumsy work, to teach grammar after this sort. (9.) It might be given under Critical Note 16th, as a sample of the Incorrigible; for it is scarcely possible to eliminate all its defects and retain its essentials.
>
> These instances may suffice to show, that even gross errors of grammar may lurk where they are least to be expected, in the didactic phraseology of professed masters of style or oratory, and may abound where common readers or the generality of hearers will discover nothing amiss. (p. 720)[*]

The prescriptionist being authoritarian, will sooner or later turn to the government to help him enforce his mandates. Even in England, where the antipathy to government interference in cultural matters has perhaps been strongest, attempts were made to establish an academy to regulate the language. Swift's proposal is fairly well known, so I shall merely cite Campbell's comment on it, that if an academy had been established, Johnson—Dr. Samuel this time—would probably have been much worse, and really past redemption." (Tucker, p. 113)

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[*] According to two granddaughters of Timothy Stone Pinneo, who was descended from a French Huguenot named Pignaud, he not only wrote readers, spellers, and grammars, but was responsible for the revisions of the first four *McGuffey Readers* and produced the fifth himself (Jean Gregory Byington and Alyse Gregory Powys, "An Inside Story of the McGuffey Readers," *Elementary English*, November 1963, pp. 743-747).

There were proposals earlier than Swift's, however: Thomas Sprat in his *History of the Royal Society* . . . , 1667 (Spingarn, p. 113); and John Evelyn in a letter of 1665 (Spingarn, p. 310). Evidently a good many people believed that the foreign academies effectively policed their languages. In *The Tatler* for October 6, 1710, appeared this sentence: "It has been the practice of the wisest Nations to learn their own Language by Stated Rules, to avoid the Confusion that would follow from leaving it to vulgar Use (Tucker, p. 65)." And Defoe, in *An Essay upon Several Projects,* 1702, recommending an academy, wrote:

> The peculiar Study of the Academy of Paris, has been to Refine and Correct their own Language; which they have done to that happy degree, that we see it now spoken in all the Courts of Christendom, as the Language allow'd to be most universal. (Tucker, p. 58)

The attitudes which these quotations exemplify would be of no particular importance to us if they merely represented certain of the quaint prejudices of our forebears that we have long since outgrown. Unfortunately they are still with us, though they are rarely stated as blatantly. We must therefore consider for a moment how they developed and why they have persisted.

From the early Middle Ages to the middle of the eighteenth century, Latin was the language of university instruction. A boy's schooling consisted in good part first in learning Latin and then in reading material in Latin. From the Renaissance on his Latin reading was mainly of Roman classics, and if he progressed far enough he learned Greek and read the Greek classics. Inevitably, he inferred from such a course of instruction that both the literatures and the languages of Greece and Rome were superior to his own. The vernacular literatures and languages were given little attention in the schools, and the established attitude, even among some of the greatest writers, like Swift and La Fontaine, was that the ancients were superior to the moderns. Pope in the *Preface* to his *Iliad* remarks that "It is certain no literal Translation can be just to an excellent Original in a superior Language; . . . (Durham, p. 342)." James Harris, in 1781, objects to the monosyllables in English.

> It has been called a fault in our Language, that it abounds in Monosyllables. As these, in too lengthened a suite, disgrace a Composition: Lord Shaftesbury, (who studied purity of Stile with great attention) limited their number to nine, and was careful, in his *Characteristics*, to conform to his own Law. Even in Latin too many of them were condemned by Quintilian.
>
> Above all, care should be had, that a Sentence end not with a crowd of them, those especially of the vulgar, untunable sort, such as, *to set it up, to get by and by at it,* etc. for these disgrace a Sentence that may be otherwise laudable, and are like the Rabble at the close of some pompous Cavalcade. (Tucker, p. 83)

And Lord Monboddo, quoted earlier, not only finds . . . "the English language . . . altogether unmusical. . . ," but he even prefers American to British English:

> I have reason to think that this vehemence of accentuation, which distinguishes the English language so much from the Italian, and, I believe, from every other language in Europe, was not practised formerly in England so much as it is at present; for I have been told by some gentlemen who have been in America, and particularly by one who was there many years, that the people of New England do not accent syllables with near so much violence as the people of Old England do at present; and for that reason they speak more clearly and intelligibly. The fact appears to be, that the people of New England have preserved the language they brought with them which was the language spoken in England in the days of Milton, when men both spoke and wrote better in England than they do now. (Tucker, p. 123)

The implication, then, of the school curriculum was that the English language was inferior to the classical languages. When English finally became the language of all instruction and of most scholarly writing, it was obviously necessary to treat it in the same way that Latin had been treated. Correct Latin had been learned from a grammar. So correct English had to be learned from a grammar. Besides, English was an inferior language and should be made over as far as possible to conform to the patterns of Latin and Greek.

The word *pedant* once meant simply a teacher. But as the earlier quotation from Franklin showed, we cannot determine with confidence the present meaning of a word from its etymology. We can, however, get a lot of social history—sometimes painfully illuminating social history—from etymologies. So with *pedant.* A dictionary definition of it runs as follows: "A person who overrates erudition, or lays an undue stress on exact knowledge of detail or of trifles, as compared with larger matters or with general principles; . . ." (Century, p. 4352). The same dictionary supplies these illustrative quotations. From Steele: "*Pedantry* proceeds from much reading and little understanding. A pedant among men of learning and sense is like an ignorant servant giving an account of a polite conversation." And from Coleridge: "*Pedantry* consists in the use of words unsuitable to the time, place, and company." The very nature of formal education makes pedants of us all on all too many occasions. We are necessarily ordered to believe unquestioningly a great deal of what we are taught, with the promise, too often only vaguely implied rather than explicitly expressed, that the time will come when we may freely reexamine what had been imposed on us, judge it, and reject what appears unacceptable. But much of what we have learned we never get around to reexamining.

Our ancestors knew little of social history, less of linguistic history. From the Middle Ages, for example, such statements as this survive: "The verb has three persons. This I hold to be divinely inspired, for our belief in the Trinity is thereby manifested in words. Some maintain that there are more, some that there are fewer parts of speech. But the world-encircling church has only eight offices. I am convinced that this is through divine inspiration. Since it is through Latin that those who are chosen come most quickly to a knowledge of the Trinity and under its guidance find their way along the royal road into their heavenly home, it was necessary that the Latin language should be created with eight parts of speech." (Arens). On the title page of Ben Jonson's grammar is the quotation from Quintilian to the effect that usage is the sole guide to correctness. And throughout Quintilian, whose work was certainly well known to Jonson, there is as I pointed out earlier, a careful examination of the implications of the doctrine of usage. Yet Jonson and the thousands of prescriptive grammarians who have followed him have insensibly drawn away from the explicit teachings of their ancient masters and have followed the implicit teachings of their medieval masters. For prescriptionism is a heritage from the Middle Ages.

The title of this paper is "Some Consequences of Our Attitudes to Language." I hope that some of the consequences have become apparent as I have described the attitudes. Two sets of them, however, I wish to deal with more explicitly. The first has been so much written about in the past thirty or forty years that I need only reiterate it. One of our tasks as English teachers is to help those of our students who want it to master Standard English if they don't already control it. To do this we must see to it that it is Standard English that we are teaching and not an artificial dialect that exists only in prescriptive texts and the speech of pedants. The consequences of persisting in the prescriptive approach are a fearful waste of time and effort, failure in achieving the goal, and the engendering of a sense of uncertainty and insecurity in the use of English which further reduces the expressive capacity of the individual.

But the serious consequence which I want to conclude with is the damaging effect the prescriptive attitude may have on the appreciation of literature. Swift and Pope, though literary artists of the first rank, were not always men of good sense. And John Hughes, whom they considered a mediocrity, occasionally made better sense than they did. In an essay *On Style* of 1758 he writes:

> When, by the Help of Study, a sufficient Stock of solid Learnings is acquired, the next Business is to consider how to make use of it to the best Advantage. There is nothing more necessary to this, than Good Sense and Polite Learnings; for as a Man may have the first without the latter, so 'tis possible one may have the latter, and yet be rather the worse than the better for it, at least to others, if not to himself. A plain unletter'd Man is always more agreeable Company, than a Fool in several Languages. For a *Pedant*, tho' he may take himself for a *Philosopher*, is far more prejudiced than an illiterate Man; and *Sufficiency* (the chief Part of his Character,) besides the Ill-manners of it, is really (as Sir *William Temple* observes,) the worst Composition out of the Pride and Ignorance of Mankind. Besides, *Affectation*, its usual Attendant, is every Body's Aversion, from the natural Hatred we have to all manner of Imposture. (Durham, p. 79)

I have quoted this passage because of its pertinence to the style of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. That book is written throughout in what purports to be the language of "a plain unletter'd Man," though anyone with any uncorrupted sensitivity to language will immediately perceive that it could have been written only by a highly gifted unlettered man. Because the prescriptive tradition insists that good English must be only that which adheres strictly to the rules, and that good writing can exist only in this narrowly defined good English, it should follow that *Huckleberry Finn* cannot be literature. To me it seems to be about the best thing Mark Twain did, probably because he had hit on a device which permitted him to use the dialects of English he was most completely master of and to reveal to the full the great unlettered artist that he was.

Many years ago as a Columbia undergraduate I took an English methods course at Teachers College under Allan Abbot, who seemed to get a pixieish delight in annoying his educationist colleagues. One day he brought to the class a mimeographed sheet with two versions of a prose passage on it. The source was not indicated, but what he had done was to take a fine descriptive passage from *Huckleberry Finn,* reproduce it first in the original, and then follow it with a stilted version of the same passage which he had rewritten in Standard English. He asked the class, many of whom were graduate students who had had many years of experience as high school teachers, to decide which was artistically the better version and to explain why. And many of them plumped for the corrected version because it was in "correct English."

Recently I mentioned this incident to one of my colleagues who had just given an examination on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* so he brought me the following excerpts from some of the student papers:

> The language of Mark Twain in Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer and his other famous writings was essentially crude because it came from substandard-speaking people. Twain was "brought up" among these people and learned their language well but at the same time mastered the true English language.
>
> Twain really abused the good solid English language, but he explained this in the case of Huck Finn when he wrote, "In this book a number of dialects are used,—I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding." This shows a very good knowledge of the people he was writing about and also an appreciation of good English.
>
> For example, Huck did not use the exact same language as Jim, although both misused the English language.
>
> In reading Twain's writings, he really cuts up the English language.

I want to conclude by attempting to put the teaching of usage into the proper perspective. The many quotations I have read you tend to magnify correctness into the major task of the English teacher. I have no intention of minimizing it. But a more important task of the English teacher—in a sense his primary mission—is to help the student to the right use of language.

By right I mean the fullest exploitation of language in all its functions. Language has three principal functions: communication, self-expression, and group identification. The first two of these scarcely need clarification, but perhaps group identification does: In a complex society where different groups use dialectal varieties of the same language, the differentiating characteristics of one group's dialect will identify a speaker as a member of that group. A street in New York will be called by one speaker [ˈθɝtɪ ˈθɝd], by another [ˈθɜtɪ ˈθɜd] and by a third [ˈθɜɪtɪ ˈθɜɪd]. We recognize the first as a speaker of General American, the second as Eastern or Southern, the third as New York—and we may look down on this last one as a member of a group we do not respect. No doubt this function of language has existed as long as dialectal variation was perceptible to people, but in the last couple of centuries its importance has increased to such an extent that the schools—and particularly the English teachers—have had to give much attention to it.

The right use of language in its first, and probably primary, function is to exploit its communicative capacity to the utmost, to learn to speak clearly, cogently, and effectively on increasingly varied topics. Such use of language can be gained only by intimate acquaintance with its manifold resources, and in our society that inevitably means through reading, for ours is an orally remarkably uneloquent society. We do talk a great deal spontaneously, I suppose, but generally not very well, and the carefully contrived talk that comes to us through commercial entertainment is striving with such determination to reach the lowest common intellectual denominator that we rarely get any help there.

The right use of language for self-expression no one can teach because the criteria are completely private. I alone know whether I am the better for having said what I have said, just as you are the only judge of the therapeutic efficacy for you of an outpouring of your words. I have no doubt that language is a valuable means of self-expression, but since its function as such is exclusively personal it cannot be taught or judged—only encouraged. But encouraged honestly, not by telling a student that an incoherent set of sentimental verses is good simply because it did him good to write them.

The right use of language for group identification requires, particularly for those students who are trying to move from one group to another, a clear understanding of this social function of language and often a painful, conscious rearrangement of long established language habits. The New Yorker who has been saying [ˈθɜɪtɪ ˈθɜɪd] for twenty years is going to find it very difficult to learn another habit of pronunciation once he has decided he wants to move beyond the limited circle of his New York City environment.

The English teacher is really concerned, then, with two language functions: language as communication and language as group identification. It is doubtless too strong to assert that these are divine and malign functions of language, but by so labeling them I can create a nice antithesis by calling the English teacher both God's advocate and the devil's. Yet there may be some value in this exaggeration if it reminds us of the contradictions inherent in our task as English teachers. Conformity to standard usage in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, pronunciation, and certain locutions is imperative for those who desire admittance to cultivated circles. And the English teacher must teach it since obviously nobody else will. But it is devil's work nonetheless, and we mustn't forget it. Nor must we forget that the devil's work always interferes with God's. Our problem, then, is merely to dedicate ourselves to doing God's work with one hand, the devil's with the other, and seeing to it that the latter never interferes with the former.

Perhaps I had better go a little deeper into our task as devil's advocate. Class distinction and particularly the emphasizing of social stratification are hardly to be looked upon as matters of divine dedication. Yet when we insist on correctness we are insisting on a means of guaranteeing acceptance in the higher social strata. A good speller does not necessarily have superior intellectual endowments nor is the person who says *you was* necessarily a moron. But without reasonable competence in spelling and the habit of avoiding *you was* and such like forms, a man is not likely to have a chance to exploit his intellectual capacities. He will be ostracized by the cultivated classes. We must therefore help him to a control of correctness as a means; but we must remember that it is a means only, not an end in itself. To spell well is very convenient, and those of us who can do it tend to make a virtue of it. Most English teachers, I fear, do spell pretty well, and that's what often makes them so obnoxious to others. Because they find spelling so easy themselves they find it hard to understand why others can have trouble with it, and lay it to stupidity, laziness, or perverseness. Pride in spelling is one of the peculiarities of English-speaking peoples—though the French share it to an extent—resulting from the vagaries of our orthography. Italians, Germans, Spaniards, and most others using alphabetical systems of transcription worry very little about spelling because there's nothing to worry about; they simply transcribe what they say. If one did not know the history of our chaotic spelling one would be tempted to attribute the contriving of it to the devil himself. But we've got it, it has become a shibboleth of cultivation—in fact of intelligence itself, and an English teacher who does not make his students fully aware of the terrible importance of correct spelling is most derelict in his duty. And yet at the same time he must make clear that it is merely a means, whereas the exploitation of language is an end.

Finally I want to include this witty and amusing bit of verse by Irwin Edman. My response to it distresses me a little, particularly in the final line where the culmination of the whole thesis of the poem is concentrated in the last word, *good* in adverbial function. *Good* is just as satisfactory as *well* as an adverb for a great many Americans —Miss Bryant in her recent *Current American Usage* says: "In nonstandard English *good* is often substituted for the adverb *well*, as in 'Do it good'; on the other hand, *good* in reference to the functioning of inanimate things is becoming increasingly common in standard English, as in 'The car runs good'" (p. 100). For a great many Americans, then, the punch line of the poem will have no climactic effect at all. For us it does because we are so sensitive to the distinction, a distinction which has become important because of centuries of insistence on the social significance of minute variations in usage, variations which are trivial in the communicative function of the language. I have an uncomfortable feeling that we must have a touch of the pedant in us to enjoy Edman's verses. But here they are:

Hymn to Basic English

Oh, teach me some Basic English wherein a man may speak
As easily to Finn or Turk as to a Pole or Greek.
I'll waive all fine nuances, all synonyms and rhyme,
So long as I am understood in whatsoever clime.
What matters most is what you say and not the way you say it;
If what you want is action, pretty phrases may delay it.
Some gross of nouns, a slew of verbs, these neatly do the trick.
Eight-hundred-fifty words and lo! the world's affairs will click.

It's true that Shakespeare used some words the Basic lists ignore,
And Holy Writ in Basic is a rather basic bore.
But this is not the time for language loved by the aesthete,
Away with cumbrous metaphors, with overtones effete.
Say all your thoughts in Basic, and the planet soon will know 'em.
Forget the fancy words and write a Basic poem.
One world, one heart, one lingo, perspicuously plain
In Hong Kong or in Harlem, in Morocco or in Maine.

O shade of Walter Pater, O ghost of Thomas Browne!
O Euphues, O Lyle, Ruskin's Wild Olive Crown!
Dispraise not our streamlining, do not so coldly stare,
The manner may be mangled but the meaning is still there.
O lovers of the lyric who talk all round and round,
O labyrinthine utterers of truths dark and profound,
O you who now can only speak to London or New York,
Or, at the outside, Sydney or Ontario or Cork,
Henceforth from Minsk to Monterey, you will be understood,
They'll think your English simple, but they'll say, "He speaks it good."

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USAGE—STANDARD VS. SUBSTANDARD

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Since we address ourselves today to the study of English usage, it will be well to start with a consideration of what we mean by usage. The term is subject to a good deal of confusion, especially in relation to the term "grammar," and, indeed, its right to be used at all is challenged. In an article appearing in the *Wisconsin English Journal* of April 1962 Professor Robert Williams says, "'Usage' is one of the most abused words in the English teacher's vocabulary . . . it is time that we looked into the linguists' vocabulary for a new word which would be more honest and descriptive." If we take Dr. Williams literally, the word "usage" is less than satisfactorily honest and descriptive. The word he supplies is "dialect." We are, he says, to avoid "usage" and speak of the "dialect of the privileged or educated classes." I do not accept such a limitation of terms.

The Meanings of Usage

I am impelled first to point out to Dr. Williams that within the compass of any dialect there are many optional choices of form, word, and construction. I may speak of the room's dimensions or the dimensions of the room. Both are "standard English" (the term Dr. Williams prefers) but my choice is a matter of usage. Still speaking standard English I may say, "May I take your car?" or "Can I take your car?" My choice of *can* or *may* is usage within the dialect. Again in standard English I may inquire, "From whom is it?" or more frequently, "Who is it from?" My selection is again a matter of usage. If these acts of choice cannot be described as usage, then what term does apply? Truly they are not "dialect," for any possible definition of "the dialect of the privileged or educated classes" would have to include these and many other alternatives.

It is true indeed that "usage" is also employed as the term to describe the choice between "he done it good" and "he did it well." It is also true that the speaker of "he done it good" and similar constructions speaks a dialect different from that of the one who habitually says, "He did it well." Despite the possible confusion between the two levels of applications of the word "usage," the word is too valuable to suppress. I query whether verbicide is any more respectable than homicide.

A review of the writings of modern linguists reveals no avoidance of the word "usage," and its appearance as a major subject in this institute is further evidence of its acceptability. On one point I would agree with Dr. Williams, namely that the term "usage" must not be considered a synonym for "correctness" nor must it be used to mean only acceptable usage. No one could deny that it has been so abused. But the term is broader than that.

Some years ago I defined usage in a publication (Robert C. Pooley, *Teaching English Grammar*, 1957, p. 106) and I am willing to stand upon this definition still. "Usage is to grammar as etiquette is to behavior. Behavior simply notes what people do; etiquette sets a stamp of approval or disapproval upon actions, or sets up standards to guide actions. The specific business of usage, therefore, is to determine what choices and discriminations are made in the use of English, and then to analyze the forces, social and psychological, which determine the choices. In practical terms, usage is the study which notes the variety of choices made in the use of English, observes the standards set up by such choices or created to influence such choices, and attempts to evaluate the validity of such standards."

Attitudes toward Usage

The teaching implications of this definition should be reasonably clear. First of all, we note that what we mean by usage is the way people use language: "I ain't got no pencil" is as much a phenomenon of usage as "I don't have a pencil." But second, usage is concerned with the choice between these locutions. The person who says "I don't have a pencil" does so for reasons of habit, choice, or sensibility to the social effects of word patterns. The one who says "I ain't got no pencil" does so from exposure to certain patterns of language use and habits derived therefrom, and is lacking in, or indifferent to, sensitivity to the effects of word patterns in various social situations. Correction of the second speaker is certainly not a matter of punishment or shame, nor is it a matter of grammar, in the sense of studying the structures involved. Actually communication is equally clear in either locution. Correction then becomes a matter of awakening sensitivities to social expectation, similar in approach to teaching a little boy to remove his hat in church, and a little girl to say "please" and "thank you." Usage, therefore, can never be concerned with absolutes. No element of language in use can be said to be entirely right or entirely wrong. Each element has to be evaluated in its linguistic context, with regard to a number of variables, and even after this evaluation is made, no clear right and wrong will appear. Rather there will be a sense of degree of appropriateness, with allowance for a tolerable range of deviations. What is the difference between "I shall be pleased to join you," and "Sure, count me in"? There is no right or wrong, good or bad, here; not even a decision of appropriateness until all the contextual and social factors have been weighed. Ultimately it will be seen that in some situations the second is preferable. The person who can use either pattern in its appropriate place is the person skilled in English usage, the goal toward which our instruction is directed.

The prescriptive view of usage, in which certain patterns are labelled *wrong* and other patterns are labelled *right* without regard to context and social setting, is still evidenced in many school books and courses of study and especially in popular views about language. The large number of well-educated people who say "Between you and I" do so with conscious pride in avoiding the error of "you and me" to which they have attached the label "wrong" as a result of overzealous teachers in early school years. Today a new use of *as* as a preposition is developing from the overteaching of the avoidance of *like*. I see on students' papers now such sentences as, "My mother, as other mothers, would not let me out at night," or "Most of my friends, as John, like the movies." This is clearly a replacement of the preposition *like* by the conjunction *as*. Why? Because prescriptive teachers have so firmly set the stamp of *wrong* on *like* that students avoid it even in its historically proper use. It is not *like* that is wrong, but the teachers who label it so.

We need not wonder at the persistence of the prescriptive view of usage. After all, it developed in the eighteenth century, became firmly established in the nineteenth, dictated the attitudes of textbooks of the early twentieth century, and is still present in many current texts. Only in the late twenties of this century was a clear alternative presented and defended by such leaders as Sterling Andrews Leonard and Charles C. Fries. They and their followers have established what may be called the observational or relative theory of English usage, namely, that usage is what happens in language, and that many factors contribute to the formation of standards by which patterns of usage are to be judged. It was my privilege as a member of this group to write a definition of good English in these terms in 1931, a definition which was adopted by the National Council of Teachers of English and is now frequently cited without reference to its source. Allow me to repeat it now, as it contains the elements which describe the attitude toward usage I would like to make as my contribution to this linguistic institute. "Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to speaker and listener. It is the product of custom, neither cramped by rule nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language."

In the Classroom

The question raised by a good many teachers at this point is, "How can I teach students to speak and write correctly if usage is relative and nothing is really right or wrong?" This is a practical question and I shall try to give a practical answer. When the baby in the house says, "Me want milk" or "Me want a cookie," the conscientious mother, before providing milk or cookie, helps the infant to say, "I want milk," "I want a cookie." The repetition of these expected patterns aids the child to form the habit of using them. He is more likely to establish these patterns if his parents themselves are accurate and he is gently corrected each time he errs. The teaching of usage in elementary schools should be as much along these lines as possible: a teacher who is himself accurate in socially acceptable usage, and who gently corrects his students when they deviate from accepted forms. In junior and senior high schools this method of ear-training in usage is better than any other, for to a degree beyond common belief, the errors in usage in the written work of students are the reflection of unconsciously retained speech patterns.

The establishment of a curriculum of usage teaching is founded on the application of two simple principles: 1) How much social penalty does the usage item bear? and 2) how frequent is its use? At any grade the basic curriculum in usage consists of those items which carry the heaviest social penalty and are most frequent in use. Items which occur rarely and carry slight social penalty can be postponed or omitted. It is therefore possible to make lists at each grade level, from observation of the spoken and written English of the children, of the items of usage most in need of instruction, and of those items which may be left untaught at that grade. Obviously the needs of individual children will differ widely, but the objective is to bring the class as a group to the minimum acceptable level in all spoken and written work.

Without any violation of the principles of frequency and social penalty we can set a standard of minimum acceptability, provided we stand ready to alter it in accordance with changes which are taking place all the time in English usage. I offer the following list as an example:

1. The elimination of all baby-talk and "cute" expressions.
2. The correct uses in speech and writing of *I, me, he, him, she, her, they, them.* (Exception, *it's me.*)
3. The correct uses of *is, are, was, were* with respect to number and tense.
4. Correct past tenses of common irregular verbs such as *saw, gave, took, brought, bought, stuck.*
5. Correct use of past participles of the same verbs and similar verbs after auxiliaries.
6. Elimination of the double negative: *we don't have no apples,* etc.
7. Elimination of analogical forms: *ain't, hisn, hern, ourn, theirselves,* etc.
8. Correct use of possessive pronouns: *my, mine, his, hers, theirs, ours.*
9. Mastery of the distinction between *its,* possessive pronoun, *it's, it is.*
10. Placement of *have* or its phonetic reduction to *v* before *I* and a past participle.
11. Elimination of *them* as a demonstrative pronoun.
12. Elimination of *this here* and *that there.*
13. Mastery of use of *a* and *an* as articles.
14. Correct use of personal pronouns in compound constructions: as subject (Mary and *I*), as object (Mary and *me*), as object of preposition (to Mary and *me*).
15. The use of *we* before an appositional noun when subject; *us,* when object.
16. Correct number agreement with the phrases *there is, there are, there was, there were.*
17. Elimination of *he don't, she don't, it don't.*
18. Elimination of *learn* for *teach, leave* for *let.*
19. Elimination of pleonastic subjects: *my brother he; my mother she; that fellow he.*
20. Proper agreement in number with antecedent pronouns *one* and *anyone, everyone, each, no one.* With *everybody* and *none* some tolerance of number seems acceptable now.
21. The use of *who* and *whom* as reference to persons. (But note, *Who did he give it to?* is tolerated in all but very formal situations. In the latter, *To whom did he give it?* is preferable.)

22. Accurate use of *said* in reporting the words of a speaker in the past.
23. Correction of *lay down* to *lie down.*
24. The distinction between *good* as adjective and *well* as adverb, e.g., He spoke *well.*
25. Elimination of *can't hardly, all the farther* (for *as far as*) and *Where is he* (*she, it*) *at?*

This list of twenty-five kinds of corrections to make constitutes a very specific standard of current English usage for today and the next few years. Some elements in it may require modification within ten years; some possibly earlier. Conspicuous by their absence are these items which were on the usage lists by which many of us here were taught; which survive today in the less enlightened textbooks:

1. Any distinction between *shall* and *will*
2. Any reference to the split infinitive
3. Elimination of *like* as a conjunction
4. Objection to the phrase "different than"
5. Objection to "He is one of those boys who *is*. . .
6. Objection to "the reason. . . is because. . ."
7. Objection to *myself* as a polite substitute for *I* as in "I understand you will meet Mrs. Jones and myself at the station."
8. Insistence upon the possessive case standing before a gerund

These items and many others like them will still remain cautionary matter left to the teacher's discretion. In evaluating the writing of a superior student I would certainly call these distinctions to his attention and point out to him the value of observing them. But this is a very different matter from setting a basic usage standard to be maintained. I think it is fair to say that the items I have listed in the basic table lie outside the tolerable limits of acceptable, current, informal usage; those I have omitted from the basic table are tolerated at least, and in some instances are in very general use.

Disputed Usage: Making Decisions

We come now to the interesting matter of divided and debatable usage. These are the items of language use which are widely current, which are often heard in public speech and frequently appear in print, yet are condemned by many textbooks and are disliked by conservative teachers, editors, and other language-conscious people. First, let it be granted that anyone may say, "I don't like that word and I won't use it." This is certainly a right which any individual may exercise. But if he says, "I don't like that word and therefore *you* are wrong, ignorant, or malicious when you use it," we have another matter. It is concerning these matters that the good judgment of teachers and editors is called into play. I shall illustrate some cases of disputed usage to show how judgments may be formed.

1. *Proven* as participle of prove. Condemned as an illogical formation. Now fully acceptable.
2. Misplaced *only*. Condemned in many grammar books in the construction, "I *only* had five dollars." Has a long literary history and is now fully acceptable.
3. *Data* as singular. "I had a hard time collecting this *data*." Condemned in the singular because it is a Latin plural. Now widely used in high level journals. Has become a singular collective noun.
4. The *reason* I came late *is because* I wanted to. This construction still evokes howls of rage from some professors. It is condemned by practically all handbooks. Yet it has a long and honorable history and is used by reputable writers today. Why condemn it?

There is a fair and practical test to apply to items of this kind. It is a threefold test in answer to these questions:

a. Is the item in reasonably common use today?
b. Does it have a continuous history of use in English for a century or more?
c. Was it used in the past, and is it used today, by writers of acknowledged reputation?

If the answers to these questions are affirmative, then the item is unquestionably in good use, no matter what grammarians and critics may say.

Some of you may have the question in mind, "What about preparation for college? I may allow these debatable usages, but my students, and I also, will be condemned for permitting these errors to go unchecked." This is another practical question, and it has a practical answer. Suppose your student writes, "The reason why Hamlet didn't kill the king immediately was because he was not sure of his guilt." You may in all fairness write in the margin, "Avoid this construction." Do not treat it as an error, but caution the student that college professors and other well-informed persons will take exception to it, and to play safe he had better avoid it.

An Outlook

In conclusion, allow me to suggest a frame of mind toward all usage instruction. Our wonderful English language has enormous resources and is especially rich in the varieties of ways in which the same idea may be expressed. Stimulate your students to explore these varieties of expression to come up with as many different forms as will adequately express the same meaning. In the course of these explorations some patterns will be formal and literary, some easy and colloquial, and some perhaps substandard, or socially subject to penalty. Assist your students to note these varieties of level of expression, not as matters of right and wrong, but as combinations of words establishing a *tone* to the communication. Students can readily discriminate between—"Please leave the room," "Go, now," "Beat it, kid," "Scram." Each utterance has its appropriate place, each conveys the same idea, and each establishes a tone. With such practice students can gain a feeling for words and phrases as carrying not only meaning, but the quality of social appropriateness, or tone, as well. The establishment of such sensitivities to the shades of language use is the ideal of instruction in usage. In society, the well-mannered person is one who is sensitive to all aspects of a situation and behaves in a way most appropriate to each situation, formal when it is proper, easy where desirable, familiar where acceptable. English usage is exactly parallel: to say the right thing in the appropriate manner in a suitable tone of expression is the ideal for which we are striving.

A final practical question calls for an answer. It is "Where do I find help in making judgments in matters of usage about which I am not sure?" One answer is, of course, to develop the habit of observing language usage and spotting the particular item as it occurs in speech and writing. This is the best foundation of usage judgments, and it is one which can be successfully passed on to students, to set them the task of finding evidence for usage decisions in the speech and writing that they observe. For somewhat quicker returns, recent dictionaries and handbooks of usage are the answer. I shall discuss the place of the dictionary in matters of usage in my lecture tonight. At this moment I recommend the latest and most reliable guide to English usage, entitled *Current American Usage, How Americans Say It and Write It,* by Margaret M. Bryant, published by Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1962. Margaret Bryant for years has been writing the usage column in the *English Journal* and in this book combines her rich experience with the contributions of many other investigators to form a useful handbook. Somewhat more literary in flavor is *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage* by Bergen and Cornelia Evans, published by Random House, New York, 1957. The authors say, "This dictionary . . . is designed for people who speak standard English but are uncertain about some details. It attempts to list the questions that most people ask, or should ask, about what is now good practice and to give the best answers available." On the whole it does these things very well; I refer you to the article on the word *like* as an example. The materials for making sound judgments in matters of usage are reliable and readily available. What is now most needed is the attitude of mind on the part of teachers and the public directed toward seeking information and using it, in the place of repeating worn-out rules which were perhaps once valid, but are superseded by the normal changes of a living language.

Usage

REGIONALISM IN AMERICAN ENGLISH[*]

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I

I shall start by making a number of confessions. First of all, I have never taught English in high school or had the task of teaching English to freshmen in college. In my early days I earned my living by teaching *eins, zwei, drei* at the University of Texas and elsewhere. Secondly, I acquired my English in my teens, first in Wisconsin, then in Texas. Ten years in the Chicago area, four in Ohio, fifteen in Rhode Island, and the last eighteen in Michigan have given me a unique blend of our vernacular. My inveterate habit of imitating all regional and social varieties of our English, including Lowland and Upland Southern, for the purpose of analyzing them, has left its mark on the way I talk, so that, in a sense, I am a linguistic chameleon. One cannot escape the hazards of one's profession, especially if one is in love with it.

Finally, I came to the study of English by way of comparative Indo-European and Germanic linguistics. George Oliver Curme, author of the well known *Syntax* (1931) and *Parts of Speech* (1935), shunted me into the field of English linguistics in the middle twenties, and before I knew it I was put in charge of the field survey for the American Linguistic Atlas (1930), a project of the American Council of Learned Societies. When the Depression and the World War deprived the Atlas of financial support, I accepted the editorship of the *Middle English Dictionary* at the University of Michigan (1946).

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[*] The slides accompanying this paper were taken from the following three books based upon the collections of the Linguistic Atlas of the Eastern United States:

PE: Hans Kurath and Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961).

VF: E. Bagby Atwood, *A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1953).

WG: Hans Gurath, *A Word Geography of the Eastern United States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949, 1966).

Since it is not possible to reproduce the various maps I showed on the screen, I have given references to the published maps. Only Map 3 of the *Word Geography* is presented here for general orientation, with permission of the University of Michigan Press.

In the English field, my teaching has been confined to seminars devoted to American English, chiefly in its regional aspects, and to Middle English dialects. A fair number of doctoral dissertations on these subjects have been written under my direction.

This, then is my peculiar background, which you will want to take into account in your evaluation of what I have to say. My deficiencies in practical application in the classroom will, I hope, have their compensation in my presentation of a scholarly point of view regarding English usage, which should lead to an intelligent and humane procedure in the classroom.

II

I shall assume that the teacher of English in grade school, in high school, and in college wants to familiarize his pupils with the "best" usage current in the area in which they live and hope to play an effective part when they are grown up. Over and above this initial aim, he wishes to introduce them to the language of English literature of the present and the past, for which a knowledge of cultivated usage current in their native communities is the proper foundation.

If these objectives are granted, it is obvious that the teacher of English should have reliable information on the usage of well educated men and women in the area where they engage in teaching. Without such information they will flounder badly, waste a lot of time, and antagonize their students quite unnecessarily, especially those who come from well educated families.

How does the teacher of English acquire the information he needs for sensible and effective teaching? Can he rely upon the handy desk dictionaries? Yes, to some extent. They do book "good" usage, to be sure. And in recent years they report the more common socially acceptable variants more liberally than in the past. But they fail utterly in telling us in what part of the country this or that variant is current and in good standing. They may tell us that *log* has the vowel of *law* or of *lot;* that *due* may sound exactly like *do* or have the *y* of *yes* between the *d* and the vowel; that *dear, dare, door, poor* may or may not have an *r*-sound at the end; that *aunt, half, rather* may have the vowel of *fat* or of *father;* that *room, roof, root* may have the vowel of *boot* or of *book.* But they give no indication in what part of our far-flung country these variants are current. All they say is that these variant pronunciations are in good standing *somewhere,* and, by implication, that you may have your choice without losing caste.

But is that enough? Why don't the dictionaries tell us where each of the socially acceptable variants is used? Why this reticence? To answer this question, I'll describe the regional dissemination of some variant pronunciation on the Atlantic Seaboard, where about 1500 speakers have been interviewed in their homes by the field workers of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States. The notations in brackets with these examples refer you to a page number of a book. See the footnote at the beginning of this article for full titles of books.

1. **door, care, here** [*PE* 156] Four geographically separate areas in the Atlantic States lack final and preconsonantal /r/: Eastern New England (as far west as the Connecticut River); Metropolitan New York and surroundings; Virginia east of the Blue Ridge with adjoining sections of Maryland and north central North Carolina; and South Carolina and Georgia. The last of these "*r*-less" areas extends westward along the Gulf of Mexico to south central Texas and is roughly coextensive with the cotton belt, the old plantation country. On the periphery of these four areas, the "*r*-less" type carries social prestige and is being adopted by the better educated. This feature of pronunciation is current in well defined subareas and follows clear rules. It is characteristic of the speech of about one third of the population of the United States. I see no reason whatever why our dictionaries should not convey this information, either once for all in the Introduction or by printing the *r* in italics in the body of the dictionary, when it is not sounded as such in the four areas mentioned above. They might even point out that these areas agree with Standard British English in this respect.

2. **glass, pasture, afternoon, bath** [*PE* 67-70] Most Americans have the vowel of *hat* also before friction sounds, as in *after, bath, rather, glass*. But some New Englanders use the low-front or low-central vowel of *father* in such words. This usage is especially common in eastern Massachusetts (the Boston area) and in Maine. Elsewhere in New England this sound is used rather sporadically by better educated urbanites, and, curiously enough, by old fashioned rustics. This social dissemination points to conflicting trends in usage within New England. Outside of New England, this sound is used to some extent in Metropolitan New York and in Virginia, where it is a mark of distinction among persons of social pretensions. Not very long ago some Midwesterners, especially those of New England descent, were inclined to adopt it; but the waning prestige of New England has discouraged this effort. One might say that the Midwest has grown up.

What should the dictionaries do in this case? They should certainly state in the Introduction that the low vowel in such words is chiefly a New Englandism, but has some currency elsewhere; and that is rather often used by actors in the serious classical drama in conformity with British English usage. However, owing to its inconsistent use even in Eastern New England, this regional variant must be given for each word in which it occurs in the body of the dictionary. The *Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* by J. S. Kenyon and T. A. Knott (1944) will serve them well for New England, and the collections of the Linguistic Atlas of the Eastern States provide at least some information on Metropolitan New York and Virginia.

3. **new** [*PE* 163-5] Words like *new, tube, student, due,* usually have no consonant /y/ before the vowel in Pennsylvania and to the north of it. Here *news* begins like *noose, tube* like *tool, student* like *stool,* and *due* is homophonous with *do.* From Virginia southward, on the other hand, the consonant /y/ is always there, however faintly articulated. The regional dissemination of these two types of pronunciation is so clear in the Eastern States that every dictionary should provide this information. As far as the Midwest is concerned, it is fairly safe to predict that it agrees with the North Atlantic States; and the Lower South from Georgia westward may be expected to fall in line with Virginia and the Carolinas. But we will not really know this until the findings of field surveys of these areas have been completed and published. Usage in the wide Midland belt, including the valleys of the Ohio River and its southern tributaries, is hard to forecast. Only a systematic survey will give us the answer. Does Iowa fall in with the North or with the Midland?

In passing, I should perhaps say that after labial and velar consonants, as in *pure, beauty, accuse, argue,* all varieties of cultivated American English have the consonant /y/ before the vowel.

4. **coop** [*PE* 107-114] Before lip consonants, as in *coop, hoop, hoof, roof, room, broom,* and also before /t/ as in *root, soot,* some areas have the vowel of *too,* others that of *book.* In *coop* the regional dissemination of the variants is clear-cut. North of a line running along the southern boundary of Pennsylvania *coop* has the same vowel as *too,* south of it that of *book.* This fact should of course be recorded in any good dictionary of American English. Unfortunately, the incidence of these two different vowels is apt to vary from word to word. Thus, for instance, *room* usually has the vowel of *book* in Eastern New England and in Eastern Virginia, but rarely elsewhere. For this variant feature we must have a regional record of each word in which it

occurs. Failing that, the dictionary can only report the existence of the variation without indicating the habitat of the variants.

5. **creek** [*PE* 97] North of a line passing from west to east in West Virginia and Virginia, *creek* generally rhymes with *sick*, to the south of it with *seek*. In New England and especially in New York City, some cultured speakers deviate from the regional "norm," prompted by the spelling. In this case the dictionaries should report not only the existence of the variants, but also where each predominates. Of course, we do not yet have the relevant information for large sections of the country.

6. **tomato** [*PE* 106] As a curiosity, I will describe the choice of the stressed vowel in *tomato* on the part of 150 cultured speakers in the Eastern States. In New England, Metropolitan New York, Philadelphia, and Virginia, the vowel of *father* predominates in this word, elsewhere that of *fate*. Middle class speakers predominantly rhyme the word with *Plato* in the entire area, and some of the "folk" with *matter*. The social distribution of these three pronunciations makes it a convenient social shibboleth in parts of the Atlantic States. Whether this "gadget" works in other parts of the country, I do not know.

7. **four, forty** [*PE* 44] *Four* and *forty*, *hoarse* and *horse*, *mourning* and *morning* have different (contrasting) vowels in the greater part of the Eastern States, but in a belt extending westward from Metropolitan New York through New Jersey and Pennsylvania such pairs have the same vowel, so that *hoarse* and *horse* are homophonous.

8. **stairs, care** [*PE* 38-9] In words like *stairs, care,* the vowel varies regionally in a striking manner. The greater part of the South has here the vowel of *bat*, Pennsylvania the vowel of *bet*, coastal South Carolina the vowel of *bait*. New England exhibits all three variants, their frequency varying regionally.

9. **Mary** [*PE* 50] When we turn to words like *Mary* and *fairy* we find yet another dissemination pattern. Here the vowel of *bait* predominates in all of the southern coastal plain and in all of New England.

I may perhaps add that I have struggled with the complicated behavior of the vowels before historical *r* in the Eastern States and presented them from a definite phonemic point of view in a separate chapter of *The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States,* a book based upon the collections of the Linguistic Atlas which I wrote in collaboration with R. I. McDavid, Jr., of the University of Chicago.

I could go on to show how the vowels behave from area to area in words like *dear* and *eery, pure* and *fury, car* and *starry, fur* and *hurry*. But I have probably listed enough examples to indicate that our dictionaries have a problem on their hands. Until our field surveys are completed throughout the country and the phonemic status of the variants has been established, they can do little more than report existing variations without pinning them down to particular sections of our country. However, they should do at least that much. Even with their awkward pronunciation keys they can tell us more than they now do.

I cannot refrain from commenting upon the hopeless mess our dictionaries are in when they try to communicate information on pronunciation. They insist on basing their so-called pronunciation keys on the wretched spelling of Modern English. This spelling was fairly adequate for late Middle English at Chaucer's time, for which it was devised, although even then the phonemically distinct long and short vowels of similar quality were not distinguished in writing. This spelling system became fixed in the last decades of the fifteenth century, when printing was introduced, although by then it was already out of step with current pronunciation. The sweeping changes in the vowel system and the distribution of the vowels in the vocabulary that have taken place in the course of 500 years are rarely reflected in our spelling: hence our system of sounds and our spelling are completely out of kilter. For instance, we write *ea* to represent three functionally distinct vowels, as in *eat, break, weather;* on the other hand, we write one and the same vowel sound in a variety of ways, as in *no, toe, low, boat, though.* What happens when you base your "pronunciation key" on such a spelling is quite obvious: you get into a mess! You can not succeed. Teachers and pupils have to suffer for it. Those little dots and bars and scoops and shed-roofs over the vowel symbols are hard to remember. They are apt to mean a different thing for every vowel letter. This practice brings together such strange bedfellows as the vowels in *bit* and *bite*, in *bet* and *beet,* which have no resemblance whatever to the ear. Besides, no two of our desk dictionaries agree with each other. But enough of this misery from which teachers suffer more than I do. Perhaps a sensible phonemic notation will some day be adopted. The only advance in this direction during the last two decades has been the introduction of the letter ə, the so-called schwa to replace the dozen or more older renderings of this ubiquitous unstressed vowel of Modern English. The battle was won by the consultants of the *American College Dictionary.*

III

Nobody will question the value of reliable information on the usage of cultured speakers in different sections of our country. Every teacher of English will want to know not only those features of cultivated usage that have nationwide currency, but also those that are peculiar to the area in which he or she teaches. If he also has some familiarity with divergent speech habits of well educated speakers in other areas, so much to the good. He will then be intelligently tolerant of them, when he is dealing with students from other parts of the country. A New Englander, say a Bostonian, who would undertake to impose his own "good usage" upon Pennsylvanians or Midwesterners would be wasting his time. Worse than that, he would antagonize students coming from good families in those areas. I still remember the reaction of my son, then eight years old, to the efforts of one of his teachers in Providence, Rhode Island. Mimicking her to perfection, he said, "She wants me to say (ha·f pa·st). I WON'T DO it." Other children, I take it, feel the same way about this kind of tampering with the speech of their parents.

If this much is granted we may proceed to the consideration of another question. Should the teacher bother to familiarize himself with the speech habits of the common folk living in the community where he does his teaching? Can't he simply say "That's wrong; you must say so-and-so," when a pupil uses a folk word or a verb form that is not current in upper class speech, or pronounces *far* like *fur* or articulates *believe* in one syllable? I don't think so. He should be in a position to say, in effect: "I know that many people around here say it that way, so it is all right when you talk with them. But when you talk to strangers, or want to be a lawyer or a doctor some day, you should say it differently. Also, you'll make a much better impression when you're looking for a job that pays well." What you are telling him is essentially that for his own good he must learn an upper class dialect and use it where it counts; that he shouldn't wear his jeans when his "Sunday best" are called for.

To make myself clear, I will state some generalities concerning *folk speech* and *common speech*.

By *folk speech* I mean the speechways of those who have enjoyed little schooling, read little besides the daily local newspaper, and have few occasions to talk with people from communities beyond the narrow confines of their native district. In some sections of our country this social group is now rather small, in others still fairly large.

By the term *common speech* I refer to the linguistic usage of the middle class of American society, who constitute the great majority of speakers in rural as well as urban communities. For a brief characterization of this social class, see *WG*, p. 9. Most teachers I dare say, have to deal with the sons and daughters of such families.

Now there are some rather widespread misconceptions about the nature of *folk speech* (frequently called *dialect*) and of *common speech* that must be dispelled. These social dialects are apt to be charged with being "ungrammatical," when in fact they simply have a system that differs in one respect or another from the system of *cultivated speech* (usually called "the standard language"). We are apt to call the verb form "wrong" or "incorrect," when we hear such utterances as the following: he *dove* right in, she *rung* the bell, I'm all *wore* out, he got *bit* by a dog, have you ever *et* crabs?

What we actually mean is that these particular verb forms are not current in cultivated speech, although they obviously conform to patterns of verb forms shared by all regional and social varieties of American English.

What needs to be emphasized is that every social and regional dialect of English—and, of course, of any language, no matter how "primitive"—is systematic. It has a system of sounds (phonemes), each of which has a certain range of phonic variations; it has a set of grammatical forms to which the individual words conform; it has certain rules governing the structure of phrases and sentences.

IV

Up to this point, I have been describing some regional features of pronunciation in the Atlantic states. Their dissemination can now be fairly accurately described by reference to a scheme of major speech areas and their subdivisions which I have drawn on the basis of regional vocabulary. [*WG* 3]

Thus /r/ after vowels (not between vowels) is lacking in subareas 1 and 2 (Eastern New England), subarea 6 (Metropolitan New York), and subareas 15, 17, 18 (the greater part of the coastal South).

Glass, half, bath, aunt have the vowel of *hat* everywhere except in Eastern New England (subareas 1 and 2) and, though quite sporadically, in subareas 6 and 15.

After dental consonants, as in *tube, duty, new,* the entire area south of Pennsylvania has the consonant /y/ before the vowel, but Pennsylvania and the entire North usually lack the /y/ in this position.

Coop and the surname *Cooper* regularly have the vowel of *cook* south of Pennsylvania but rarely elsewhere; *room,* on the other hand, has this vowel only in Eastern Virginia (subarea 15) and in Eastern New England (1 and 2); *food* only in Pennsylvania (8 and 10).

Four and *forty, hoarse* and *horse* have different vowels nearly everywhere except in Pennsylvania, New York State, Metropolitan New York (subareas 6, 7, 8, 10).

The important thing to note is that these variant pronunciations are not scattered at random, but are concentrated in rather well defined areas, which upon investigation turn out to be correlated with various aspects of the history of the population: the original settlement, inland (westward) expansion, the rise of cultural centers, the development of trade areas, schooling, etc. Take these, for example.

1. husks (of corn cob) [*WG* 134]

The *husks* of a cob of corn go by that name in all of the North and in Pennsylvania with adjoining parts of Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia. In the South Atlantic States they are called *shucks,* and this term has presumably been carried westward in the plantation country along the Gulf of Mexico, just as the Northern term *husks* became established along the Great Lakes and beyond in the course of the westward movement of New England and Pennsylvania families in the nineteenth century. In the Ohio Valley, which channeled the flow of settlers from various parts of the Eastern States, both expressions are current, with varying frequency. You may know whether in Iowa, or Minnesota, or Missouri *shucks* has some currency beside *husks.*

2. pancake [*WG* 121]

Pancakes made of wheat flour are served for breakfast in all parts of the Eastern States. They generally go by that name north of Pennsylvania, but in "down-east" New England they are known as *fritters.* Some Pennsylvanians call them *flannel cakes* (a term brought to this country by the Scotch Irish). To Southerners they are *batter cakes.* The term *hot-cakes,* current on the Delaware River and on Delaware Bay, looks like a Philadelphia creation. The dissemination of the term *griddle cake,* not shown on this map [*WG* 121] is more complicated. What do you call this delicacy in other parts of the country? Do we have a national term for it or only regional ones?

3. doughnut [*WG* 120]

With the national term *doughnut,* the following regional expressions are current in the Eastern States: *fried-cake* in New England and New York State; *nut-cake* in Maine and New Hampshire; *cruller* (from Dutch) in the Dutch settlement area along the Hudson River and adjoining parts of New England, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania; *fat-cake* in the Pennsylvania German area. West of the Alleghenies only *doughnut* and *fried-cake* seem to have survived.

What happens when the commercial bakery takes over from the housewife? How fast do regional terms fade out? To what extent has the "store word" *cottage cheese* superseded the regional terms *curd cheese, pot cheese, clabber cheese*? The study of words for such "homely" things gives us important clues to the trend from regional to national usage.

4. dragonfly [*WG* 141]

The dragonfly goes by several different regional names. The New England settlement area has *darning needle;* Pennsylvania and the Upland South (settled largely by Pennsylvanians) have *snake feeder,* the Carolinas *mosquito hawk,* Virginia east of the Blue Ridge *snake doctor.* On the map, the Virginia Piedmont area is set off by a heavy line. Within this area *snake doctor* has general currency. On the periphery, the heavy solid dots show individual instances of this term in the speech of cultured speakers who have adopted this term: along the coast in place of the indigenous *mosquito hawk,* to the west in place of *snake feeder.* This example shows how words and pronunciations current in an important culture area spread abroad, first to the speech of the better educated, then to the middle class, and finally to the folk. In the Atlantic States, the subareas dominated culturally by Boston, Metropolitan New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Charleston, South Carolina, are the dynamic centers that influence the usage of the surrounding countryside. Thus local usage gives way to regional usage, and regional usage may finally bow to national usage. However, in American society regionalisms will long survive, since we do not have a cultural center that dominates the entire country, nor a social upper crust that commands the admiration of the large middle class. In these respects our far flung union of states differs radically from Great Britain and from France, which have had a single dominant cultural center and a well defined elite since early modern times, even since the Middle Ages.

5. creek [*WG* 93]

A small water course is rather generally known as a *creek.* But in New England it is more commonly called a *brook* (as in England), in Pennsylvania a *run,* in the South a *branch.* Since these terms are fixed in the names of streams, they will long survive, just as the Dutch synonym *kill* persists in stream names in the Dutch settlement area along the Hudson.

6. string beans [*WG* 133]

String beans are commonly known as such in the North, as *snap beans* in the coastal plain of the South, as *green beans* in western Pennsylvania and the Upland South. *Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary* (1963) enters all three terms, without regional identification, as usually. Curiously enough, *green beans* and *snap beans* are defined, but *string bean,* the usual Northern term, is provided only with a cross reference to *snap bean,* the Southern expression.

7. you-all [*WG* 114]

The well known Southern *you-all,* a convenient expression to distinguish "more than one" from "one" person (but sometimes also addressed to a single person) extends as far north as the Pennsylvania line. However, in the Upland South with its numerous Pennsylvania settlers, the Pennsylvanian folk form *you'ns* still competes with the Southern *you-all.*

8. The Virginia Piedmont

You have probably noticed that the regional dissemination of words follows recurring patterns. There are Northernisms, and there are Southernisms. Moreover, some words occur only, or mostly, in Pennsylvania and the Upland South: these I call "Midland" words. A description of the Virginia Piedmont is perhaps enough to demonstrate that we must distinguish three major speech areas in the Eastern States: a Northern area which reflects in the main the New England settlement area; a Southern area roughly coextensive with the plantation country; and a Midland area, settled very largely by Pennsylvanians [*WG* 3].

By inference from what we know about the "westward movement" from the original colonies in the nineteenth century, one expects the Northern speech area to extend to the Great Lakes and beyond; the Southern speech area may be expected to extend along the Gulf of Mexico into central Texas; and the Midland area will surely include the valleys of the Ohio River and its tributaries and Missouri (the Ozarks). Surveys now in progress, or completed though unpublished, will give us definite answers. In all probability, the lines of demarcation are less clearly defined west of the Alleghenies than on the Atlantic slope, what with the progressive mingling of the mainstreams of settlers from the East, the lack of a strong local tradition, and the introduction of public schooling almost as soon as new settlements were established.

The major speech areas referred to above are by no means uniform in usage. In the North, Eastern New England and Metropolitan New York stand out as distinctive subareas; in the Midland, Pennsylvania often differs from West Virginia, the latter being shot through with Southernisms; in the South, Virginia, Eastern North Carolina, and South Carolina are well defined subareas. In matters of pronunciation this fact is quite evident, as I pointed out earlier.

I shall now describe several sets of lexical isoglosses—lines setting off the areas in which particular words are current. It is on the basis of such bundles of lines exhibiting similar trends that dialect boundaries are established.

9. Virginia [*WG* 31, 32]

Eastern Virginia, sometimes with the exclusion of the Norfolk area and the points of land on Chesapeake Bay, has many distinctive features, among them the expressions *cuppin* for *cowpen, cow house* for *cowbarn, corn house* for *corncrib,* which are not used west of the Blue Ridge.

10. Northern Words [*WG* 5, 6, 7]

The isoglosses shown here separate the North from the Midland. To the north of these lines a cast iron frying pan is called a *spider,* the seesaw a *teeter* or *teeter board,* and the pantry may be called a *buttery* by the older people. You will observe if you consult the map in *Word Geography,* that the four lines shown run fairly close together in Pennsylvania, but flare out as you approach the Delaware and the Hudson. Clearly, a dialect boundary is not the simple thing that one may wish for. Its structure can be very complicated. Not infrequently transition areas lie between two major dialect areas, as the Hudson Valley in this instance.

11. Midland [*WG* 15, 16]

The expression *blinds* for the roller shades and *bawl* for the noise a calf makes when it is taken away from its mother are characteristic of the Midland. The North and the plantation country of the South use other words. I should like to emphasize the fact, hardly suspected before the survey for the Linguistic Atlas was carried out, that the Upland South differs markedly from the Lowland South in its speechways, although the Appalachians are more and more shot through with what I call "Southernisms" the farther South one goes.

12. Speech Areas [*WG* 3]

These few illustrations will give you some idea of the procedure by which a generalized scheme of major speech areas and their subdivisions can be constructed. Using about 400 regional expressions recorded by the field workers of the Linguistic Atlas, who visited every single county in the Atlantic States between 1930 and 1948, I have drawn up the plan I have described. You may want to look at it once again. (See page 169.) The heavy solid lines represent the sharpest demarcations between the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern areas; the double lines their continuation as loosely knit bundles of isoglosses. Subareas are set off by single thinner lines. Of these subareas, 1 plus 2, 6, 7, 15, and 18 are the most clearly defined active focal areas. Subareas 11 and 12 are transition areas; subareas 3 and 4 (including western Connecticut, western Vermont, and Upstate New York) are the chief fountain heads of the speech of the entire Great Lakes area; and so forth.

The practical value of such a simplified scheme delineating a complicated situation should be obvious: it provides a convenient terminology for describing the geographic range of individual regional features, whether lexical, grammatical, or phonological. Its scientific value is equally clear, in that it provides a point of departure for elaborating the correlation of speech areas with settlement areas, trade routes, etc., which in turn enables us to trace the history of the dialects spoken in the major as well as the minor subdivision of the entire area.

In conclusion, let me show you the dissemination of some verb forms in the Eastern States.

13. ate [*VF* 9]

New Englanders of all social groups are apt to rhyme the past tense of *eat* with *let,* as Englishmen do.

14. dived in [*VF* 6]

New Englanders will unblushingly say *dove in* instead of *dived in;* and they will say *hadn't óught to* for *ought nót to* [VF 26].

Such regionalisms in verb forms and in other grammatical forms are decidedly rare in cultivated American English. In folk speech, on the other hand, they are common enough, as all of you can testify from your classroom experiences. E. Bagby Atwood's *Verb Forms in the Eastern United States,* based upon the collections of the Linguistic Atlas, makes it perfectly clear that "substandard" verb forms are largely regional and not, as H. L. Mencken thought, common to what he called "the vulgate" of all parts of our country. The recently published abridged and annotated edition of Mencken's *American Language,* edited by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., effectively corrects this misconception.

I regret that in support of the point of view that I have tried to convey I had to rely entirely upon evidence gathered in a limited geographical region. Readers will want to know that Professor Harold

Allen of Minnesota has relevant data for the Linguistic Atlas of the Midwest in hand.

In an age that revels in novel theories, I have the reputation of being an "extreme empiricist" or a "mere factualist." I do not mind this charge. In fact, I want to live up to this reputation and construct my own theories on an ample factual basis.

A PERSPECTIVE ON USAGE

PHILIP B. GOVE
G. & C. Merriam Company

Language is a system of sounds and symbols that can be manipulated to communicate human concepts. One word leads to another, one utterance to another as, in documentary movies, one rivulet joins another high in the mountains, breathlessly increasing in volume and speed until it flows into the ocean. Our language is like the ocean except that we can sound the ocean's depth, measure its surface, and calculate its volume. The limits of a living language cannot be determined.

About 300 million people today speak English as their first or native language. Many other millions use it as a second language. English-language newspapers produce daily several billion words. Publishers turn out 15 to 20 new books a day—another million words. Every speaker (it has been estimated) sends forth into the air about 40,000 words a day. Multiply this by 187 million speakers in the U. S. alone, and you are in the realm of a figure so large that it is incomprehensible.

This huge number of words constitutes the open-end corpus that is usage in its entirety. It encompasses not only every utterance spoken and heard but also every utterance written and seen, even, if you will, every graphic symbol and every significant sound. Written utterances are usually seen more times by more people and persist for a longer period than a single spoken utterance. In this aspect usage includes even the number of times a word is looked up in a wordbook. This number can hardly be counted, but it is clear that the countable number of times a word is used is only a fraction of its total linguistic diffusion. For example, a word used once by Shakespeare may be looked up millions of times by high school and college students.

Book reviewers take nourishment from books. Books must have authors. To reviewers, then, the sun rises and sets on the number of authors they can read. One reviewer can, however, make lasting acquaintance with only a few hundred authors a year and in a decade with only a few thousand. The late Wilson Follett near the end of a lifetime of preoccupation with belles lettres doubted that as many as 14,000 writers could ever be found in the period of two decades—he said "one brief period" (*Atlantic,* January 1962)—who are worth being quoted for their use of English. Here is a crux. Here is evidence that

Follett had no conception of linguistic diffusion. To him the criterions of usage are to be based on the language used by only a few thousand writers.

The Conflict: A Matter of History

It is fascinating to study usage in its vast areas of linguistic diffusion, to watch language in motion, to observe what society does with its word stock, and how language in turn shapes our culture. Our culture makes of language a system, and like all systems it has behavior that can be analyzed in terms of practice. If the language student who discovers this practice and formulates it in rules—only with difficulty can we avoid this word—could restrict their circulation to fellow language students, the rules could never become instruments of oppression or repression. Such restriction would be impracticable, however, for busy teachers who cannot devote all their days and nights to studying language need from language students enlightenment and guidance so that they can teach the truth about language. They need help particularly to offset a body of artificial rules that began in the eighteenth century and have been affirmed and reaffirmed down to the present. Unlike the rules that language students derive from a realistic observation of language, these classical or traditional rules that need offsetting were not originally formulated on the basis of what users of the language do, but rather of what they ought to do in the opinions of a few. They were even objected to in the eighteenth century by competent observers of the language behavior.

Noah Webster 175 years ago said:

> But when a particular set of men, in exalted stations, undertake to say, "we are the standards of propriety and elegance, and if all men do not conform to our practice, they shall be accounted vulgar and ignorant," they take a very great liberty with the rules of language and the rights of civility.
>
> *Dissertation on the English Language* (1789) as quoted by A. W. Read, *PMLA* LI (1936), 1147.

After Professor Bergen Evans and his sister Cornelia Evans brought out their *Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage* in 1957, Wilson Follett attacked it in the *Atlantic* (February 1960). Though the attack may have seemed withering to *Atlantic* subscribers, it is only speciously convincing since it reveals complete ignorance of the history of English. Its very opening sentence is inaccurate in fact and loaded with misleading implications: "Linguistic scholarship, once an encouragement to the most exacting definitions and standards of workmanship, has for some time been dedicating itself to the abolition of standards; and the new rhetoric evolved under its auspices is an organized assumption that language good enough for anybody is good enough for everybody." It should be unnecessary to point out wherein this is nonsense unsupported by evidence.

Follett charged the Evanses with managing to convey shrewdly that "the way to attain effective expression is to keep our ears open, bank on our natural and inescapable linguistic inheritance, and cultivate an English that will make us indistinguishable from the ostensibly educated surrounding majority." This, intended as an accusation, is actually a fairly sound generalized attitude about usage. Follett, however, went on to fill a long paragraph with examples of what he called marginal, dubious, and suspect expressions that must inevitably result from keeping one's ears open. Then he turned on the Evans dictionary as the place where one can find "the densest possible concentration of what the elder rhetoricians classed as solecisms," a dictionary that is "a translation into practical advice of what the most erudite philologists and lexicographers have for some time been telling us about the sources of health and vitality in our language."

I hope the absurdity of this needs no underlining, but in case you do not yet detect the holier-than-thou arrogance of the self-appointed superior user of English, Follett said the kind of English the Evanses support may be all right for the purveyor of insurance or real estate or the chairman of a fund-raising campaign. "Let those who choose define usage as what a swarm of folk say or write by reason of laziness, shiftlessness, or ignorance; the tenable definition is still what the judicious do as a result of all that they can muster of conscious discrimination."

In a later article in the *Atlantic* (March 1960) Professor Evans by calling attention to a bit of indisputable history and common knowledge poked holes in Follett's charge that anything goes, a "charge that, with all the idiot repetition of a needle stuck in a groove, the uninformed ceaselessly chant against modern grammarians. It is useless to argue with such people because they are not, really, interested in language at all. They are interested solely in demonstrating their own superiority." What John Steinbeck said about literature in his Nobel Prize address in Stockholm (December 10, 1962) applies to this kind of cultivation of language: "Literature was not promulgated by a pale and emasculated critical priesthood singing their litanies in empty churches—nor is it a game for the cloistered elect, the tin-horn mendicants of low calory despair."

Some Pertinent Illustrations

A professor of English just turned fifty said recently that in his boyhood in Michigan he had an English teacher who assiduously trained him and his classmates to say *somebody's else* and never *somebody else's*. That was somewhere around 1925. *Somebody's else*, you may recall, is the idiom of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and Mark Twain. On July 31, 1881, the New York *Times* headlined a story about public school teachers being told that *somebody else's* is correct. Approval of this idiom was immediately disputed by a purist of the time, Alfred Ayres in his *Verbalist* (1881). Forty-five years later at least one English teacher agrees with Ayres and is still hammering away an insistence upon using *somebody's else*.

Before leaving Ayres we might observe other examples of his prescriptiveness. He objects to the verb *donate* as an abomination, to the noun *dress* for an outer garment worn by women instead of the proper term *gown*, to the noun *lunch*, an inelegant abbreviation for *luncheon*. He even points out in passing that the question "Have you had luncheon?" is preferable to "Have you had your luncheon?" because "we may in most cases presuppose that the person addressed would hardly take anybody's else luncheon." The adjective *underhanded* "though found in dictionaries, is a vulgarism" for *underhand*.

Some of these may sound unbelievable to one who is unfamiliar with what Follett's predecessors were capable of. But they are no sillier than some of today's pronouncements about *like, who, more unique, different than, due to, do not think, cannot help but, back of, blame it on*. One of the surprising things about these shibboleths is their small number: you can easily classify them in a list of well under a hundred.

Insight for the Teacher

If any teacher feels like saying, "You may be right historically or linguistically, but what do I teach my high school students who are facing college entrance exams?" I think the answer is simple. Tell them that there is an absurdly small number of expressions which they may be asked to stop and change. Teach them how to recognize these shibboleths and how to deal with them on examination papers. After all, answering questions in an examination is a kind of linguistic occasion, and surely giving the answer that the examiner wants is highly appropriate to the occasion.

This suggests a definition that is probably (or should be) the best-known definition of good English, that of Professor Robert Pooley:

> Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to speaker and listener. It is the product of custom, neither cramped by rule nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language.
>
> —*Grammar & Usage in Textbooks on English* (1933), 155.

Note that this definition says nothing about reputability (by reference to standard authors), nothing about preservation (by defense of the traditional or elegant), and nothing about literary or formal usage. The key word is ***appropriate.***

Fifteen years before Pooley's definition Brander Matthews spoke on Dr. Johnson's once held but later abandoned ideas about fixing the language:

> To "fix" a living language is an idle dream; and if it could be brought about it would be a dire calamity. Luckily language is never in the exclusive control of scholars. It does not belong to them alone, as they are often inclined to believe; it belongs to all who have it as a mother-tongue. It is governed not by elected representatives but by direct democracy, by the people as a whole assembled in town meeting.
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> —Paper by Brander Matthews, February 14, 1918, as quoted by A. W. Read, *PMLA* LI (1936), 1173.

I want to read to you one more statement about good English, that of Professor Sumner Ives:

> . . . "good" English is that which most effectively accomplishes the purpose of the author (or speaker) without drawing irrelevant attention from the purpose to the words or constructions by which this purpose is accomplished. Thus, for ordinary purposes, "good" English is that which is customary and familiar in a given context and the language which should be used is that which is currently being used, provided this current use does not bring unwelcome attention.
>
> —*Word Study (December 1961).*

Good English does not have a one-to-one relationship with standard English. So, finally, to deal directly with the standard/substandard pair I will give you an acceptable formal definition of the term *standard English:*

> . . . the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well-

> established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood.
>
> Webster III (1961), 2223.

I do not have for you a definition of the substantive term *substandard English,* for substandard English is not an entity in the same way that slang does not exist as an entity, as pointed out by Stuart B. Flexner in the Wentworth-Flexner *Dictionary of American Slang* (1960, p. xv). No normal person in real life talks substandard English all the time. Instead I will give you a definition of the adjective *substandard* that can be applied to this or that expression as it occurs in context:

> . . . conforming to a pattern of linguistic usage existing within a speech community but not that of the prestige group in that community in choice of word (as *set,* for *sit*), form of word (as *brung,* for *brought*), pronunciation (as *twicet,* for *twice*), grammatical construction (as the boys *is* growing fast), or idiom (as *all to once* for *all at once*).
>
> Webster III (1961), 2280.

Support for the Student

Everyone is a student of language in the sense that he is an observer and user, or in somewhat the same way he is a student of physiology whenever he is awake. But he has only limited control over physiological processes. He cannot ordinarily will his heart to beat faster nor his kidneys to function differently. Chances are he does not even know what his pancreas does or why he has lymph glands under his arms. Similarly he uses language that he does not wholly understand and certainly does not always consciously control. This native spontaneous use continues even though English is formally studied every year from the first grade through the twelfth. The number of hours a day that a student comes under the influence of an English teacher is small compared with those under the influence of other teachers; and for some students even the school in its totality may not be their chief linguistic influence. In any event, a student like everyone alive has problems of continuous adjustment, of rejection and acceptance, of frustration and satisfaction. Most of these problems are in one way or another language problems. His use of language should be a strength not a weakness, an opening to understanding not a barrier. It should above all be appropriate to the situation. A teacher can introduce a student to the language of literature when he is ready so that when (if ever) he puts on an aesthetic or critical hat and wants to read for pleasure, he can do so. But I suggest that a teacher should avoid telling a student that what he has learned to be appropriate for various nonliterary or extracurricular situations is not to be used because it is wrong according to a set of inapplicable rules.

Standard English includes the colloquial English of all normal people. Standard English and colloquial English are not contrastive, as pointed out by Kenyon. No one should struggle with this problem without reading John S. Kenyon's "Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English" (1948). At one time in the study of English usage scholars regarded elevated texts as the proper standard for grammars, and colloquial differences found in other utterances—now often called casual—were regarded as inferior. Professor Charles Voegelin in discussing this point says that "the new inclination of linguistic interest in America is in no danger of returning to the classical view." (*Style in Language,* ed. T. A. Sebeok, 1960, p. 57). I hope he is right.

DIALECT DIFFERENCES AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES IN AN URBAN SOCIETY*

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When kings have become philosophers and philosophers have become kings, when the average American citizen becomes less intensely competitive with his neighbors and more willing to give each one a chance to do to his fullest capacity the work for which he has the greatest aptitude and interest, then as class markers lose their significance it will hardly be necessary to talk about social dialects. But until that time, since we will be judging a person's social standing by the way in which his use of English measures up to what we consider the marks of educated speech, it will be important to understand what are the linguistic indicators of social differences in a given community. We all know from our experience that such indicators exist, though we may actually misjudge the significance of a particular item. To show how mistaken one can get, I will confess that until I was nearly thirty I could not imagine an educated person failing to distinguish between *horse,* the animal, and *hoarse,* the condition of one's voice, or between *do,* "to perform," and *dew,* "moisture." But I grew up in a community where one's vowels were markers of social standing; I have taught in other communities—Charleston, South Carolina; Lafayette, Louisiana; Cleveland and Chicago—where dialect complexities could be readily observed; I have spent some 3000 hours interviewing informants for the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, and many more hours charting and describing the differences between communities or between social groups in the same community; and I have stirred up a few students to do more intensive studies of this kind than I have yet managed to do. The evidence gathered in this fashion I shall try to present objectively; if any remark should seem to impinge on a sensitive corn, the corn-bearer should not blame me but consider it a fault of the society within which the phenomena occur.

A dialect, in the sense in which American scholars use it, is simply

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*Reprinted from *Sociolinguistics,* Proceedings of the UCLA Sociolinguistics Conference, ed. William Bright (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965).

an habitual variety of a language, set off from other varieties by a complex of features of pronunciation (/krIk/ vs. /krik/), grammar *(I dove* vs. *I dived),* or vocabulary *(doughnut* vs. *fried cake).* Dialects arise through regional or social barriers in the communications system: the stronger the barrier, the sharper the dialect differences. Most often we think of a dialect as the way some stranger talks; we generally assume that we speak "normal English"—or French or Russian or Burmese or Ojibwa, as the case may be.

The most obvious dialects, to most of us, are the regional varieties —the Eastern New England type, of the late President Kennedy; the Southwestern variety of President Johnson; or the Charlestonian variety which everyone in the Up-Country of South Carolina mocked in something like the following:

We'll have a late date [le·ət de·ət] at eight [e·ət] and go out [əut] tonight [tənəit] on the boat [bo·ət] along the Battery [ba·trI] and throw brickbats [-ba·ts] at the battleships [bat·tl-]. Other varieties are less conscious, but we generally do fairly well about sorting out the stranger from the person who grew up in our home town.

But in addition to regional dialects, we have social dialects. A social dialect is a subvariety of the speech of a given community, restricted to representatives of a particular ethnic, religious, economic or educational group. By and large, the more that one variety is esteemed above all others in a given community, the sharper will be the distinction between the favored variety and all others. No community is without such social dialect divisions; but, in general, the fewer the locally sanctioned class barriers, the more difficult to find the true class markers. Since it is impossible to give all kinds of social dialect situations in detail, I shall confine myself to two examples—Greenville, South Carolina, where I grew up, and Chicago, where I now live and work. Both illustrate the traditional pattern of urban growth from in-migration, though the scales and the details are different. For the first, I draw on years of intuitive observation as a child and, later, observations the more likely to be objective since as a child I felt no identity with any local class or clique or cult. For Chicago, I rely on conscious observations, especially on the dissertation of Lee Pederson, now of Emory University, who has recently completed his doctorate at the University of Chicago.

Greenville, like most of the Upland South, was originally settled by Ulster Scots and Pennsylvania Germans, who came south along the Shenandoah Valley and the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge. A few of the most adventurous drifted northwest with Daniel Boone and his associates; another group fiercely infiltrated the mountains where they made some of the best whiskey in the world (illegal, of course) until the industrialization of moonshining during the unlamented Noble Experiment. Most, however, settled down to family farming. The town of Greenville, in the heart of the county, developed out of a village that grew up around a grist mill that was set up during the American Revolution. Here the county seat was located with the establishment of counties in the 1790's, and a small professional élite, partly from the cultural focus of Charleston, partly from that of eastern Virginia, founded law firms, banks, and other businesses. Early in the nineteenth century the village became a summer resort for rice planters and their families during the malaria season (roughly May 1–November 1); a few of these summer people became permanent residents, and part of the local élite. Others from the Charleston area refugeed there during the Civil War. From the house servants of these Charleston-oriented families are descended many of the present day leaders in the local Negro community.

With the spread of cotton culture following the invention of the gin, the plantation system—with accompanying Negro slavery—spread to the southern half of the county, and the Negro population increased to about one third of the total by 1860. But the plantation interests never dominated the county. In particular, the mountainous northern half of the county was unsuited for plantation agriculture, and the mountaineers were particularly resentful of Negro slave competition. The county was a stronghold of Unionist sympathy before and during and after the Civil War; contrary to the official myth, the percentage of desertions from the Confederate Army was high, and there were many echoes of the popular designation of the War as "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." A Greenvillian, Benjamin Perry, was governor of South Carolina during the shortlived period of reconciliation before Congress established the Reconstruction governments. With emancipation, most of the plantation slaves became tenant farmers, and many Negroes continue in that status today, despite the continued drift of Negroes from farm to city and thence to the North.

During the period of industrialization that set in toward the end of the nineteenth century, the county in general and the city of Greenville in particular became one of the centers of the Southern textile industry. The mills maintained the traditional employment patterns of Southern industry established by William Gregg, at Graniteville, South Carolina, in the 1830's. Gregg had looked to the textile industry as the salvation of the poor white farmers crowded off the land by the spread of the plantation system, and as a refuge where they would be protected against the unfair competition of slave labor. The continuing pattern has been for new mills to be staffed by displaced or unsuccessful farmers from the mountains and other unproductive areas, though by now textile employment has become a hereditary way of life for the fourth generation, who may move from mill to mill over a hundred-mile span, but who remain tied to the industry, basically one for low-skilled labor, susceptible to long periods of depression and unemployment and bitter competition from the newer mills in the Deep South. Except for menial tasks, Southern mills hire few or no Negroes, and the traditional threat of Negro employment is cannily exploited by mill management whenever the unions launch organizing drives; as a result, the cottonmills around Greenville, as elsewhere in the South, remain essentially ununionized. Until recently, most mill operatives have lived in company-owned villages (with company stores furnishing long-term credit sometimes little short of peonage) which, like the mills, were set up just outside the city limits to escape city taxes; however, since World War II the company villages have begun to disappear, as the mills have sold off the houses to operatives and others.

The mill schools were rather poor at first, thanks to a district school system that till the 1920's provided little help from the state (in this connection it must be recalled that there was no constitutional commitment to public education in South Carolina before the Reconstruction Constitution of 1868). About 1920, when the population of the mill districts had reached twenty thousand, little less than that of the city proper, mill management established a united and segregated district, largely restricted to the children of mill operatives. This system was independent of the city system which provided a competent traditional education for local whites, and a separate and inferior one for Negroes. So strong were the social and economic barriers setting off the mill district from the town that it used to be said, not altogether in jest, that Greenville was a community of three races—whites, Negroes, and cottonmill workers; the mill hands and the city people were as mutually distrustful as either group and the Negroes. Within the Negro community, of course, there were also competing groups.

Negro speech and educated white speech of the town has loss of constriction in postvocalic /-r/; rural white, mountain and cottonmill speech retained it. Educated speech had [raɨt] but [raˑd]; uneducated speech had [raˑt]. *Nice white rice* became a shibboleth; for

Negro, cottonmill, rural uneducated, and mountain speech most commonly had [na·s hwa·t ra·s], while a few speakers with Charleston or Eastern Virginia connections (or pretensions) had [nəis hwəit rəis]. A few Charleston and Virginia-oriented speakers (mostly women) affected the so-called "broad *a*" as in *half past* or *dance*. This had no prestige, and was in fact often an excuse for ribald humor. The Charleston intonation and vowel qualities would be tolerated in elderly distinguished citizens, but cruelly ridiculed in the young.

From this microcosm it seems a far cry to the macrocosm that is Chicago. Yet here too we may trace the chain of influence from the historical background to the sources of local speech patterns and the relationships of those speech patterns to the social order.

Northern Illinois, like northern Indiana, southern Michigan and southeastern Wisconsin, was first settled from the Inland Northern dialect region—western New England, by way of Upstate New York. In many of the small towns in Chicago's exurbia the older families still show distinctly New England speech traits, such as the centralized diphthongs [ɐɨ] and [ɐʊ] in *ride* and *down*, or /ʊ/ in *spoon* and *soon*. But the city of Chicago developed a more polyglot tradition from the beginning. The city was established just as the Erie Canal made it easy for the economic and political refugees from western Europe to reach the American heartland. The Irish brought reliable labor for the new railroads and a continuing talent for lively politics; the Germans contributed their interest in beer, education, music and finance. Almost immediately Chicago also became a magnet to the younger sons of the downstate (southern Illinois) Midland settlements. Scandinavians followed Germans and Irish; toward the latter part of the nineteenth century the population of the metropolitan areas was swelled by mass peasant migrations from southern and eastern Europe—the strong backs and putatively weak brains on which Chicago's mighty steel industry was built. When this immigration tailed off during World War I, a new supply of basic labor was sought in the Southern Negro. Negro immigration has steadily increased, till Chicago is probably the largest Negro city in the world. They have been joined by Latin Americans (Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans) and most recently by rural whites from the Southern Appalachians. In response partly to the pressure of the increasing nonwhite immigration, partly to easy credit and slick promotional advertising, Chicago whites like those in other cities have spread into the suburbs, many of which are at least informally restricted to a single economic and social (sometimes even an ethnic or religious) group.

The development of social dialects, in Chicago as in most large cities, is a by-product of what might be called "differential acculturation"—differences in the ability (and the time required for it) for representatives from various ethnic and social groups to live along side each other as individuals, without stereotyped identification with the group. We have in favor of this trend the American principle of individual dignity, and the belief that each man should be allowed to improve his lot as far as his ability and his luck may permit. Against this we have a tendency of people to flock together according to their nature and common ties—whether Filipinos, Orthodox Jews, Irishmen, hipsters, or college professors—a tendency abetted by those with a stake in keeping the flock from scattering, and by the tendency of each close-knit group to reject the conspicuous outsider. The Pennsylvanians and downstaters, with a few generations of Americanizing under their belts, soon mingled freely with all but the wealthiest and most genealogically conscious Northerners. Acculturation was more difficult for the "clannish" Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians (it is the outsider who is clannish, of course; the in-group is merely closely knit). The Irish were usually Roman Catholics; the Scandinavians spoke a foreign language; many Germans suffered under both handicaps, and all three groups had broken with their native culture too recently to have abandoned many of their native customs. Nevertheless, all of these groups had enough in common with the "Older American stock" —all coming from northwestern Europe—to make some sort of symbiotic assimilation easy—though all of these older immigrant groups were to suffer during the xenophobic hysteria of 1917-19 and after. In general they managed to participate freely in the community, while retaining their cultural societies, newspapers, and even foreign language schools.

The immigrants from southern and eastern Europe suffered from the two disabilities of foreign language and Roman Catholicism. Moreover, they were largely peasants and illiterate, without the strong sense of their cultural tradition that the Germans and Scandinavians had brought. And paradoxically, one of the most successful adaptations of native cultural traditions to the opportunities of a new setting—that by some of the southern Italians to the climate of Prohibition—tended to stigmatize the whole group, whether or not they actively participated in the Syndicate's adaptation of venture capitalism. All these groups found themselves at the focus of a complicated polyhedron of forces. In an effort to help their acclimatization—and no doubt to avoid the erosion of traditional ecclesiastical allegiance—

the Roman hierarchy fostered the "ethnic parish," designed specifically for a single nationality or linguistic group. Whether or not this institution served its immediate purpose, it had the side effects of further identifying foreignness and Roman Catholicism, of separating the new groups from the American Protestants, from the "native Catholics" (chiefly of Irish and German descent) and from each other, and of fostering ethnic blocs in local politics. The blocs persist; but the common tendency of Chicagoans—as of Clevelanders—of southern and eastern European descent—is to abandon their ancestral languages and turn their backs on their ancestral cultures, even with the first American-born generation. The chief exceptions are the Jews, with a strong attachment to the synagogue, to the synagogue-centered subculture, and to the family as a religious and culturally focused institution. But for any of these groups it is possible for individuals to give up as much of their ethnic identity as they may wish, and to mingle relatively unnoticed in apartment building or housing development alongside the earlier established groups.

The American Negro is a native speaker of American English, normally of at least five generations of residence in North America; little survives of his ancestral culture, though undoubtedly more than American Caucasoids are willing to admit. Early Negro settlers in Chicago were able to settle as individuals—whether freemen or manumitted or fugitive before the Civil War, or emancipated migrants afterward; furthermore, a large number of the earliest Negro groups were skilled craftsmen, who might expect to find a place in an expanding economy, and with some education to smooth off the rough corners of their dialects. However, even as an individual settler the Negro was more easily identified than any of the whites who had preceded him; and many Negroes exhibited the traumata of slavery and later discrimination. With the mass migrations of Negroes, other forces began to operate: the arrivals from 1915 on were largely a black peasantry, somewhat exposed to urban or small town life but almost never participating in the dominant culture. Their own American cultural traditions—gastronomic, ecclesiastical, and everywhere between—often diverged sharply from those of middle-class Chicago. Their speech, though English, was likewise sharply different. Even an educated Mississippian has a system of vowels strikingly different from the Chicago pattern. An uneducated Mississippi Negro would have had his poor sample of learning in the least favored part of the Southern tradition of separate and unequal schools; his grammar would differ more sharply from the educated grammar of his region than any

Northern nonstandard dialect from the local white standard. Finally, the easy identification of the Negro immigrant provoked open or tacit pressure to reinforce the tendency of living with one's kind—a situation which in Chicago is likely to strengthen the linguistic and social features alien to the local culture. Furthermore, the displacement of unskilled labor by automation has injured the Negroes—less educated and less skilled on the whole—more than most other groups. Of the Latin American it can be said that he adds a language barrier to the physical identification from which the Negro suffers; of the hillbilly, that he is the least acculturated to urban living of any of these groups, but that his physical characteristics will make it easy for his children to pass, if they can only survive.

What, then, are the effects of this linguistic melting pot on the speech of Chicago? And what are the implications for the teacher of English in the metropolitan area?

First, the speech of the city proper has apparently become differentiated from that of the surrounding area, as the result of four generations of intermingling of Inland Northern, Midland, and Irish, and the gradual assimilation of the descendants of the early German settlers. The outer suburbs call the city /šikágo/, butcher /hagz/, and suffer from spring /fag/; to most of its inhabitants the city is /šikogo/, quondam /hog/ butcher, beset by cat-footed /fog/. To the city-bred, *prairie* and *gangway* and *clout* have connotations quite different from those they bear in the hinterlands. Little if anything survives in the city of such Inland Northern speech forms as [hɐɨ] and [hg̱u] for *high* and *how* respectively, or /éjə/ as a gesture of assent. Even the second generation of Irish, lace-curtained or otherwise, have largely lost their brogue; such pronunciations as /ohɛrə/ for *O'Hare* Field, the local airport—not unknown in Mayor Daley's pronouncements from City Hall—seem to be socially rather than ethnically identifiable.

Among the older generation with foreign language backgrounds, one finds phonetic traces of the old country tongue, such as the lack of consonant distinctions—e.g., /t/ and /θ/, /d/ and /ð/—that are regular in Standard English. Among the younger generation of educated speakers, some of the Jewish informants stand out, not only for the conventional American Jewish vocabulary, from *bar mitzvah* and *blintz* to *tsorris* and *yentz*, but for the dentalization of /t, d, n, s, z, r, l/. The former features have spread to other local groups, but the latter has not. The so-called Scandinavian intonation of English is rarely encountered even among informants of Scandinavian descent; it has not been picked up by other groups as it has been in Minneapolis.

Negroes born in Chicago before 1900 vary less from their Caucasoid contemporaries in speechways than the latter do among themselves, attesting to something like genuinely integrated residential patterns. However, Chicago-born Negroes under fifty show many features of Southern and South Midland speech, notably a consistent pattern of pronouncing the name of *Chicago* /šikágo/ in outland fashion, in often having /griz/ and /grízi/ as verb and adjective, in frequent loss of postvocalic /r/ in *barn, beard,* and the like, in contrasts between *horse* and *hoarse*, in relatively greater length of stressed vowels. Such extralinguistic speech habits as wider spreads than Inland Northern usage offers between highest and lowest pitch or between strongest and weakest stress, or the quaver of ingratiation when speaking to one supposedly in authority, also survive and are commonly recognized by Chicago-born whites. In grammar, the Chicago-born Negro who grows up in an environment of poverty and limited cultural opportunities—as most Chicago Negroes grow up—has a tendency to use forms that identify him easily and to his disadvantage, in writing as well as in speech. Most of these are forms of common verbs—*he do, it make, she have holp* ("has helped")—or plurals of nouns, like *two postes.* Many of these features of pronunciation and grammar, especially the lengthened stressed vowels, are also found among the hillbillies, who have their own paralinguistic phenomena, such as strong nasalization, and a few grammatical features like the sentence-opening *used to,* as in "Used to, everybody in these-hyur hills made they own liquor." But because there are fewer hillbillies, and because they are not so readily identified, their children have a fairly easy chance to learn Chicago speechways.

The overt commitment of American education—whether or not it is always recognized, let alone successfully executed—is that each student should acquire a command of Standard English, the English of educated people, sufficient to enable him to achieve the economic and social position to which his intelligence and ability entitle him. This does not mean that everyone should talk like the works of Henry James or Walter Pater; it does mean that everyone should be aware that certain words or grammatical forms or pronunciations will tag them as unfit. We also have an American tradition—again, one not always honored—of respect for the dignity of the individual and for the integrity of the family, no matter how odd their behavior by Madison Avenue or Sears Roebuck standards. No educational program should aim at forcibly alienating the individual from his cultural background; if he must make a break, he must make it with understanding of the forces involved.

It would therefore seem in order for a language program to start from an examination of the data, probably of a much more massive collection of data than we have access to as yet. In fact, the gathering of data should be recognized as a continuing responsibility, for the culture—and language values—will change.

With the data collected, it should be possible to determine which words or grammatical features or pronunciations are typical of the various social groups in the community. Once this objective social identification of speech forms is established, it should be possible to compare such forms with the common subjective reactions in the community—both as to the accuracy of the subjective identifications and as to the pleasantness or unpleasantness of associations.

Forms, words, pronunciations which are obviously characteristic of a minority group and which produce unfavorable reactions among members of the dominant culture should be the systematic target of the early programs in the schools. The emphasis should not be negative, on error-chasing exercises, but positive, on habit-producing drill.

Where the home language is something other than English or is a variety of English sharply removed from the local standard, it would probably be desirable to teach Standard English as a whole, as a foreign idiom, to be used in certain situations where the culture demands it. We would thus produce many bilinguals and bidialectals, capable of communicating with ease in two different cultural worlds. We have ample precedent: the late Eugene Talmadge of Georgia was the son of a plantation owner and won a Phi Beta Kappa key at the University of Georgia, but knowing that plantation owners and Phi Betas have little voting power in Georgia statewide elections, he perfected rural Georgia folk speech to induce the woolhats to support him as their spokesman. Huey Long, on the contrary, was a redneck from northern Louisiana, but educated himself to a command of Standard English (when he chose to use it) comparable to that of the Lodges and Saltonstalls. And those who have grown up in the South can cite many examples of Negro house-servants who—operating intuitively according to the classical tradition of decorum—could speak the folk dialect to the yard man and cultivated English to the quality without making a lapse in either mode. It should be possible through education to give a larger number the advantages that a few have acquired through intelligence or luck or both.

Where traces of a foreign language pronunciation exist in a student's English, these should also be approached systematically by teachers who know the structure of the English pronunciation system. The problem is a cultural, not a physiological one. The child whose parental language lacks, say, the contrast between /s/ and /z/ should not be treated like someone with a cleft palate.

English classes for speakers of other languages should be organized under someone professionally trained in the field and conversant with recent developments in techniques and materials. Here, in the Chicago situation, the new center for American English at Illinois Tech might serve as the focus for research, experimental testing, development of materials and teacher training; where no comparable center exists, it may be necessary to develop ways of strengthening the local program, perhaps by consultation with the Center for Applied Linguistics.

If children in large numbers come from homes where another language is spoken, a policy of providing an adequate command of English, through systematic training, must be in effect from the beginning of the school program. Instruction in reading English might well be deferred until speaking and auditory comprehension are developed; instruction in reading the home language could be given instead. This program would not only avoid the traumata that come from imposing too great a burden on the children at once, but might give these groups a particular feeling of achievement. For the Latin American child the code-cracking process for reading Spanish is far less arduous than ours in English; they can actually be reading two years ahead of the Anglos by the end of the fourth grade—and could effectively transfer to reading English at that time, at a fairly advanced level. To institute such an imaginative program might require a display of nerve that administrative officers have not always shown in the face of the so-called reading expert, but its cultural potentialities are such that it needs being pushed.

Here I suspect some will raise the shibboleth of "segregation." But we must remember that schools have already established special programs for children suffering from physical handicaps—the blind, the deaf, the lame. It would be only humane to provide special programs for those suffering from social handicaps—a foreign language or a sharply divergent variety of English—which have some chance of being eliminated by intelligent diagnosis and purposeful instruction; no amount of taking thought can restore sight to the blind. Furthermore, there is a great difference between true integration and mere physical juxtaposition; the earlier in the school career a positive language program is adopted, the sooner students can perform as equals, regardless of race.

Two by-products may be introduced into the school program. First, the most obviously "culturally deprived" are those whose parents and grandparents, in the heat of the melting pot, were alienated from their native cultures and led to think of everything foreign as inferior. There should be room in elementary programs for a broad spectrum of foreign languages, not merely those with the snob appeal of French, German, Italian, Spanish and now Russian, but little-discussed tongues like Hungarian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian. To develop such a program would require cultural sensitivity and some intricate arrangements for shared time, but is not beyond the power of the big brains and bigger computers that we are told are available to our general superintendents.

The second, more easily achieved, and I like to think more significant, is a deeper understanding of the meaning of dialect differences. Too many students, too many teachers even, shy away from alien varieties of English as from the plague; they feel that any variety different from their own is *ipso facto* inferior. In Detroit, even superior students have been brainwashed in courses in "corrective speech" if their pronunciation has been that of Oklahoma. But once the problem of social dialects is honestly faced it should be possible to explain that differences arise not from mental or moral inferiority but from differences in cultural experience—and that the most divergent dialect, however poorly suited for educated middle-class conversation, has a dignity of its own. Faced in this way, the social dialects of a metropolitan area become not a liability but an asset—a positive contribution to educating our students to an understanding of the variety of experience that enriches a democratic society.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lee A. Pederson discusses the social dialectology of Chicago in his doctoral dissertation written for the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Chicago, under Professors Raven I. McDavid, Jr., and Arthur M. Norman. See also "Some Structural Differences in the Speech of Chicago Negroes," by Lee A. Pederson, pp. 28-51, in *Social Dialects and Language Learning,* editor Roger W. Shuy (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965). Available from NCTE, 508 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820. $1.75. Stock No. P56-94.

DICTIONARIES, DIALECTS, AND CHANGING USAGE

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As we now proceed to relate our theory of American English usage to actual classroom practice, we focus on three key questions. First, where can we find authoritative and comprehensive information on current American English usage? Second, what kinds of usage problems actually occur in classrooms? Third, what are the responsibilities of English teachers face to face with these usage problems?

In answering the first question—where can we find authoritative and comprehensive information on current American English usage?—we may first consider Fries's *American English Grammar*[1] and the Linguistic Atlas of the United States. Undoubtedly the *American English Grammar* should be in every English teacher's library. Its method and purpose are classic in linguistic analysis, and its findings are authoritative as far as they go. However, Fries analyzed only a limited body of evidence—his three thousand letters. Usages that did not occur in those letters were not subject to his scrutiny. Much the same limitation applies to the records of the Linguistic Atlas. They cover a selected list of usages and make no pretense of being complete or comprehensive. The Atlas usages are ones chosen to reveal regional and social differences in United States speech. Moreover, the Atlas records are too technical and sequestered to be easily available to anyone but linguistic geographers and their students.

Some linguistic geographers have written books, however, that are readable by the nonspecialist without excessive difficulty. For instance, Hans Kurath's *A Word Geography of the Eastern United States*[2] defines the three major dialect areas on the Atlantic Seaboard by many specific vocabulary usages characteristic of each area. *The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States,*[3] which Kurath and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. coauthored, gives pronunciation differences for the same geographical area and thereby further documents the three major dialect areas. E. Bagby Atwood's *A Survey of Verb Forms*

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[1] (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940).
[2] (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949).
[3] (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961).

in the Eastern United States[4] gives extensive coverage to verb usages in the same areas, and his *Regional Vocabulary of Texas*[5] is a fascinating exposition of the vocabulary of the Lone Star State. All these books are informative but are not necessarily useful for quick reference in a classroom dilemma.

Another book may be somewhat more helpful in supplying pertinent information on American English usage. This is H. L. Mencken's *The American Language,* newly edited and abridged by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., with the assistance of David W. Maurer.[6] In this book, McDavid brings Mencken's trenchant observations on American English up-to-date in the light of the Linguistic Atlas findings and other relevant research since Mencken's last supplement to the fourth edition of *The American Language* in 1948.

Our most useful sources of information, however, are dictionaries. Descriptions of several should show why some dictionaries are more authoritative than others. First, let us consider three dictionaries which give opinions about usage. Two of these dictionaries are closely related: H. W. Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*[7] and Margaret Nicholson's *A Dictionary of Anglo-American Usage,*[8] which is based on Fowler's *Modern English Usage.* The third dictionary of opinion is *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage* by Bergen Evans and his sister Cornelia Evans.[9] The statements about usage in these dictionaries are intelligent, well informed, and sometimes sparkling, but they are still only opinions, not reports of actual usage facts. The authors judge usages on the strength of their own educated habits and observations. The Evanses say of their dictionary:

> This dictionary is intended as a reference book on current English in the United States. It is designed for people who speak standard English but are uncertain about some details. It attempts to list the questions that most people ask, or should ask, about what is now good practice and to give the best answers available.[10]

Fowler indicates his attitude toward usage in an entry called "Needless Variants":

> It is perhaps . . . rather a duty than a piece of presump-

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[4] (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1953).

[5] (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963).

[6] (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

[7] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926; 2nd ed. rev. by E. Gowers, 1965).

[8] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

[9] (New York: Random House, 1957).

[10] Evans, p. vii.

> tion for those who have had experience in word-judging to take any opportunity, when they are not engaged in actual dictionary making, of helping things on by irresponsible expressions of opinion.[11]

Margaret Nicholson comments approvingly on Fowler's work in these words:

> Today 'MEU' remains one of the best loved, and most provocative, reference books, as indispensable as a dictionary, in America as well as in England. Fowler not only teaches you how to write; he is a demon on your shoulder teaching you how not to write, pointing out and exhibiting, with terrifying clarity, your most cherished foibles: Love of the Long Word, Elegant Variation, Genteelism, Pedantry, Battered Ornaments. To tamper with Fowler has taken both humility and foolhardiness—born of the quotation given above.[12]

The educated person's tendency to proffer his opinions on usage is typical. In the Leonard study, *Current English Usage* (NCTE, 1932), for instance, the judges were asked to evaluate usages according to their "observation of what is actual usage" rather than their "opinion of what usage should be." In spite of this admonition, they made statements like "I do not like *very amused.*"; "I dislike this, but rather because it is stylistically bad than because it is grammatically incorrect."; and "*One* is the proper form."

Now of course there is nothing morally wrong in stating one's opinion about a usage, even though that opinion may conflict with the known facts of usage. In the United States we have freedom of speech. The sin lies in assuming that one's opinion reflects an eternal verity which all people must recognize or be damned.

A dictionary that reports actual facts of usage is *Current American Usage*,[13] edited by Margaret M. Bryant. Its subtitle suggests its point of view: *How Americans Say It and Write It*. Although its coverage is limited to usages which have been investigated by scholars, it is authoritative and comprehensive within its limits.

Towering over all other dictionaries of course, is *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. It is the most complete and easily available source of authoritative information on American English usage now in existence. It summarizes all the information that the editors and their cooperating experts could collect between 1936 and 1959. These several hundred scholarly people were seriously concerned with ascertaining the facts of modern English usage. Each of the 450,000 entries in this dictionary is as accurate and complete as limitations of space will permit.

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[11] Fowler, 1926, p. 372.

[12] Nicholson, p. v.

[13] (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, Inc., 1962).

This dictionary makes special demands upon its users. It assumes that they possess some such perspective on usage as the one we are now considering. This dictionary requires careful attention. Its quotations are clues to truly understanding the entry. For instance, if the quotation is from the *New York Times,* we know the usage is generally acceptable, because the *New York Times* is a universally respected newspaper. On the other hand, a quotation from *Billboard* suggests that the usage is less generally acceptable, because *Billboard* appeals principally to theatre people, a relatively narrow segment of our society. Similarly, a quotation from Virginia Woolf informs us that the usage is characteristic of educated English on both sides of the Atlantic, since she is a novelist and critic who is respected today wherever English is spoken. A quotation from Charles Dickens, however, tells us that the usage probably is more characteristic of nineteenth century British English than of twentieth century American English. Thus we see that *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* assumes that its users can extract accurate information from its quotations. Many words, however, appear without quotations. Their definition is possible without the pinpointing of meanings furnished by quotations.

Taking three controversial usages, we may profitably compare their treatment in these five dictionaries: Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage,* Nicholson's *A Dictionary of Anglo-American Usage,* the Evanses' *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage,* Bryant's *Current American Usage,* and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary.* The three usages are *hadn't (had) ought, he (she, it) don't,* and *it's me (us, him, her, them).*

The first usage is *hadn't ought* and *had ought* as substitutes for *ought not* and *ought.* Fowler omits these usages completely and Nicholson calls *had ought* "vulgar or illiterate" but states that it is "still occasionally seen in print." The Evanses say that since "ought is a past tense form" not a past participle, "we can no more say *had ought* . . . than we can say *had went* . . ." They then point out:

> At one time *ought* could also be used as a participle . . .

> and *had ought* was literary English. Today these forms are obsolete or dialectal. Since we cannot use auxiliaries, such as *do, be, have,* we form negative statements and ask questions in the old direct way that is now obsolete for most verbs, as in *he ought not to say it* and *ought I to tell you?*

Bryant reports the historical use of *ought* as a past participle, and also cites several uses of both *hadn't ought* and *had ought* from the novels of Sinclair Lewis. She concludes

> . . . the affirmative *had ought* is far less common than the negative *hadn't ought.* Except in dialogue, present-day written English does not employ *ought* as a participle.

Then she cites the Linguistic Atlas findings on *hadn't ought* and *had ought* in current American speech.

> According to the Linguistic Atlas, the social and educational distribution of *hadn't ought* is nondistinctive since in the Northern speech areas all types of speakers use it, making it standard in that section. *Had ought* was recorded in the Middle Atlantic and Southern Atlantic States in the context "You *had ought* to know," but was not systematically investigated in other areas, although a few instances are recorded for New England. No cultivated speaker uses this form and it occurs much more rarely than *hadn't ought.* It is found only where *hadn't ought* also occurs; thus, it is a Northern form but an uncultivated one.

How does *Webster's Third New International Dictionary,* with its tight space limitations, summarize these rather complex facts of usage? It labels both *hadn't ought* and *had ought* "chiefly dialectal." The usage label "*dial.*" in this dictionary means "a regional pattern too complex for summary labeling usually because it includes several regional varieties of American English or of American and British English." Indeed this label clearly specifies the usage of *hadn't ought* and *had ought.*

Turning now to *he (she, it) don't,* we find this usage omitted from both Fowler's and Nicholson's dictionaries. The Evanses say that "during the nineteenth century it was acceptable English to use the form *don't* in place of *doesn't*" but that it is "no longer considered standard."

Bryant's summary is substantiated by an impressive array of scholarly studies of written American English in addition to the Linguistic Atlas findings. She states:

> *Does not* is standard usage in formal written English; *don't* in the third person occurs regularly among cultivated speakers in parts of the East, but it rarely appears in writing.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary neatly takes account not only of the facts of usage but also of the opinions about usage. It states that *don't* is "often used with a singular subject by cultivated speakers though sometimes objected to."

Our last sample usage is *it's me (us, him, her, them).* Fowler and Nicholson state:

> *me* is technically wrong in *It wasn't me* etc., but, the phrase being of its very nature colloq., such a lapse is of no importance, and this is perhaps the only temptation to use *me* instead of *I.*

The Evanses say, "In natural, well-bred English, *me* and not *I* is the form of the pronoun used after any verb, even the verb *to be.*" They note further, "In standard English practice the objective forms (of the pronouns—*me, us, him, her, them,* and *whom)* can always be used except when the word is standing in subject position." This is indeed a liberal position.

Bryant details the facts of usage:

> In edited expository writing, the nominative forms (*I, we,* etc.) are generally, but not always employed; in reported conversation and in fiction, the objective forms (*me, us,* etc.) occur with some frequency . . . .
>
> That the objective forms are appropriate in spoken English receives abundant support from the Linguistic Atlas records of cultivated informants (Type III); this evidence at the same time . . . shows some significant regional variations. For example, in *It's I/me . . . me* predominates over *I* in all areas but New England, where usage is divided. Likewise *him, her,* and *them . . .* predominate over *he, she,* and *they* in the Middle Atlantic and South Atlantic States; even in New England, the exception, more than a third of the cultivated informants consistently use the objective forms.
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> Among the inconsistent users, there is some interesting variation. For example, *It's them* is not recorded by any user in New Hampshire and Maine. In the Middle

> Atlantic States, *It's she* occurs more often than *It's her.* West Virginia informants consistently use only the objective forms of all the personal pronouns recorded for that area. In the South Atlantic States, usage in *It's he/him* is divided, *them* occurs slightly more often than *they*, but *she* is always used instead of *her.*

Webster's Third New International Dictionary again gives us a summary not only of the facts of usage but also of the opinions about that usage by stating of all the objective forms of the pronouns: "used by speakers on all educational levels and by many reputable writers though disapproved by some grammarians in the predicate after forms of *be.*"

From this comparison of these dictionaries we may conclude that each has its proper use. Fowler and Nicholson, though dictionaries of opinion, together throw light on many contrasts between British and American English usage. The Evans dictionary is useful in classes where most of the students speak Standard English, want relatively minor guidance on certain moot points of usage, and are willing to accept the educated opinions of the Evanses. Bryant's *Current American Usage* gives comprehensive and authoritative information on usages which have been studied by scholars. The dictionary suffers only from the limitations of its coverage. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* stands preeminent as the most complete and authoritative source of information on modern English usage—not only in the United States but wherever in the world English is spoken as a native language. However, to profit fully from this dictionary we must follow its instructions for use and we must be aware of five basic principles which undergird its modern attitude toward the study of language:

1. Language changes constantly.
2. Change is normal.
3. The spoken language is the language; writing is a subsequent representation of speech.
4. Correctness rests upon usage.
5. All usage is relative.[14]

Upon these principles *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* grounds its judgments of American English usage.

We may now consider our second major question: what kinds of usage problems actually occur in classrooms? The answer is relatively simple if the students come from homes where Standard English is spoken. Such children are native speakers of Standard English. Their usage problems are functional rather than cultural. They need mainly to learn to observe various situations and to become aware of the usage appropriate to each. The only other kinds of problems that may arise in such classrooms are regional ones—when a child from another part of the country joins the class, for instance. Informed teachers realize that regional variations do exist even in Standard English. Radio and television serve us well by exhibiting a wide variety of regional dialects. Teachers can meet such regional differences in their classrooms with equanimity, or even pleasure.

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[14] *The English Language Arts,* NCTE, 1952, pp. 275-277.

On the other hand, social dialects cause complex classroom problems. With national emphasis on integration of schools added to the ever increasing geographic mobility of the population, classrooms without social dialect differences are rare today. Every big city has its culturally and economically deprived minorities, and their children need our special help. In Detroit, for instance, the children of Negro families recently arrived from the South speak a dialect that is both regionally and culturally distinct from Detroit's standard English. The Puerto Ricans in New York City, who actually do have a foreign language background, form an even more linguistically separated group within the total population of that city. The nonstandard dialects of such minorities are intensified by the ghettos where their poverty forces them to live. Yet they cannot find a better place to live until they can hold a better job, but their nonstandard usage blocks them from getting a better job.

These problems are complex, crucial, and unsolved today. A Center for American English is currently being established at the Illinois Institute of Technology to study them systematically. Various studies have been or are being made in New York City, Chicago, Detroit, Akron, Cleveland, and other cities. Perhaps their results will help us solve some of our classroom problems with social dialects.

To children from homes characterized by nonstandard usage, Standard English is a foreign language. Probably it should be taught by our modern methods of teaching a foreign language. At any rate, we know that no one masters a foreign language unless he really wants to do so. Consequently, motivation to want to learn Standard English is the most fundamental part of teaching it to children whose native English usage is nonstandard. Furthermore, the fact is well substantiated that one's native language will always color his use of a foreign language. We have observed that all children internalize their native language by the age of six. The implications of these facts may well give us pause. Our students who do not speak Standard English as their native language spend about six hours a day, five days a week, in the Standard-English-speaking environment of the school. The balance of their time is spent in their native-language environment. Sheer repetition reinforces the nonstandard forms in their language. If these same forms are also marks of a minority dialect, especially one spoken by a disadvantaged group, these forms may be group status labels outside of school. These facts underline the enormity of our problem and the importance of motivation on the student's part. Without his help our job is practically impossible.

Our last question focuses on the responsibilities of teachers in the light of these usage problems. Coping with regional differences is relatively simple. Hans Kurath, director of the Linguistic Atlas says:

> Unless a variant is clearly marked as "low class" or "rustic" within the area in which one teaches, it should be tolerated. To fight it is not only a waste of time, but an insult to students coming from well educated families or from other sections of the country. It breeds confusion, if not resentment in the student body. On the other hand, a teacher who can say: "Your family must have come from New England" or "Did you grow up in New York City?" or "That's the way they say it in Virginia," will command the respect of his class. In any event, he will stimulate the interest of his better students in our language, if he can tell them that well educated New Englanders, New Yorkers, Pennsylvanians, and Virginians don't talk exactly alike (although they understand each other quite easily), and point out some of the salient differences.[14]

The problems of nonstandard usage are more difficult. We realize that a child who cannot use Standard English efficiently is seriously handicapped, even though he may possess the intelligence to qualify for an intellectual career. Therefore his teachers have a responsibility to teach him Standard English usage. But before we can teach him, he must want to learn. Thus our problem becomes one of motivation. For this reason we work closely with the guidance people in our schools. We need help to motivate these children if we are to save our manpower and our nation.

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[14] "Area Linguistics and the Teachers of English," *Language Learning*, Special Issue 2 (March 1961), 9-14. Reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 205.

LINGUISTICS AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION*

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Basically, a "grammar" is a set of statements about some language—a description of the different kinds of units occurring in that language and of the different ways in which those units are combined to form sentences and other constructions. Unfortunately, such statements are often called "rules"; one effect of this usage has been to reinforce the idea that a grammar should be prescriptive rather than descriptive, with the result that many people believe that the primary function of a grammar is to prescribe what a speaker or writer of a language *should* do, rather than to describe what native speakers and writers of the language do do.

We know today that every language changes constantly, in spite of any attempts to "fix" it in some permanent form. No description of a language at one stage in its history, therefore, can be an accurate description of that language at another stage. Thus a true grammar of a given language can be no more than a description of the way in which the people who use that language actually speak it and write it at the stage in its development which the grammar claims to describe.

The author of the grammar may, of course, describe any dialect of the language that he chooses: every dialect—even a substandard dialect—has its own grammar. But that dialect of the language which grammarians—and even linguists—usually describe is the "prestige" dialect, that is, the form of the language used by those people who are considered to be well educated or "cultivated," in the form which many people who do not already speak it as their native dialect try to learn. If, in any given instance, many educated speakers of a language follow one usage while other educated speakers follow another usage, a grammarian who wishes to be objective should record both usages, although he may give greater weight to the usage which he considers more common—or even to the usage which he himself prefers, if he is careful to indicate that this is only one of two or more accept-

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*This article is based upon material which will appear in the forthcoming book *English Grammars and English Grammar,* to be published in 1967 by Noble and Noble Publishers, Inc.

able usages. He should try at all costs, however, to avoid giving the impression that any usage commonly followed by a large number of educated speakers is "wrong."

Very few writers of traditional grammars have shown such objectivity in their descriptions of English. Such writers often make statements which can easily be shown to be only half-truths, or else give rules (like the traditional definition of a sentence) which depend so heavily on *meaning* that they open the way to fruitless arguments as to whether a given example fits a given rule or not. Dissatisfaction with such grammars has led in recent years to various attempts to find methods and techniques for analyzing English which would produce results that were more objective and less debatable. In most cases, those who have made such attempts have either been linguists themselves or else have turned to linguists for guidance.

Several such linguistically oriented descriptions of English have appeared within the last twenty-five years. Perhaps the most important of these are *American English Grammar* (1940) and *The Structure of English* (1952), both by Charles C. Fries, and *An Outline of English Structure* (1951), by George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith, Jr. Almost every structural grammar of English written since 1952 shows the influence of one or another (or even of all three) of these books.

Fries's *American English Grammar* was a report on a study that he had been commissioned to make by the National Council of Teachers of English to determine the kind of grammar that should be taught in our schools. But *American English Grammar* was so different from the average teacher's conception of a "grammar" that it attracted little attention when it was first published. Some English teachers read it but could not understand it; others rejected it; the great majority did not even know of its existence. Between 1940 and 1950, however, more and more teachers had come to hear about linguistics, especially in connection with the teaching of foreign languages (and of English as a foreign language). As a result, both Fries's *The Structure of English* and Trager and Smith's *An Outline of English Structure* made much more of an impact than had Fries's earlier book. In the eyes of some college professors and of even a few secondary school teachers, these two books heralded the approach of a new era in the teaching of English. Much was expected of the new kind of grammar described in them. In 1954 Nelson Francis, who was later to write one of the best of the new structural grammars, wrote as follows in an article entitled "Revolution in Grammar" in the October 1954 issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech:*

> A long overdue revolution is at present taking place in the study of English grammar—a revolution as sweeping in its consequences as the Darwinian revolution in biology. It is the result of the application to English of methods of descriptive analysis originally developed for use with languages of primitive people. To anyone at all interested in language, it is challenging; to those concerned with the teaching of English (including parents), it presents the necessity of radically revising both the substance and the methods of their teaching.[1]

But the "revolution in grammar" that Francis described in 1954 has not spread as rapidly or as widely as many had hoped it would. In the last few years several writers have even questioned whether the study of linguistically based grammar can indeed teach students to write more effectively. Admittedly there has been no conclusive evidence of any spectacular improvement in the writing of high school students who have studied such books as Paul Roberts' *Patterns of English*. Even Roberts himself makes no great claims for the effect of linguistics on students' writing; in 1960, for instance, he wrote as follows:

> I think that the effect of linguistics on the teaching of English may be profound but that it will not be the sort of effect commonly expected. There seems to be a widespread hope that the teaching of grammar according to linguistic principles will lead directly to a great improvement in writing, a falling off in comma faults, fragments, dangling modifiers, and such errors. I think that linguistics might make some contribution in this direction, but I doubt that it will be substantial.[2]

However, in a paper which he read at the 1962 convention of the National Council of Teachers of English Roberts claimed that it is valuable for students to learn the grammar because "grammar is the heart of the humanities, and like other humane studies its ultimate justification is that it informs the mind and teaches its own uses."[3]

Certainly there is as much justification for teaching students the facts about their language as there is for teaching them facts about any part of their universe. Furthermore, experiments like the one conducted by Donald R. Bateman with a group of eighth grade students at the University School, Ohio State University, seem to support Bateman's contention that "the development of a description of the structure of English through modern linguistic procedures would seem to make it possible for students to learn to manage the structures of their language with greater facility. At the same time it seems likely that as their familiarity with the structures of the language grows they may be able to express more complex relationships of thought in their writing."[4] As reported by Bateman, the writing of students who had studied structural grammar "differs structurally in two significant ways: it is much more heavily modified . . . , but in addition to this many of the modifiers appear in more complex environments . . . ."

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[1] W. Nelson Francis, "Revolution in Grammar," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XL (October 1954), 299-312. Reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), pp. 69-85.

[2] Paul Roberts, "The Relation of Linguistics to the Teaching of English," *College English*, XXII (October 1960), 7.

[3] Paul Roberts, "Linguistics and the Teaching of Composition," *English Journal*, LII (May 1963), 335.

And yet recently several writers have echoed Roberts' statement that "it is not to be expected that study of the grammar, no matter how good a grammar it is or how carefully it is taught, will effect any enormous improvement in writing. Probably the improvement will be small and hard to demonstrate . . . ."[5]

In 1940 Fries wrote, in his *American English Grammar:*

> It is the point of view of this report that *a study of the real grammar of Present-day English has never been used in the schools* and that the conclusions concerning its effectiveness relate only to the type of "grammar" that has been tried.[6]

He was referring, of course, to traditional grammar. But it seems to me that the conclusions voiced by several writers, including even linguists, concerning the ineffectiveness of linguistically oriented materials in helping students to improve their writing, may also "relate only to the type of 'grammar' that has been tried." I feel that one reason why the study of one or another of the structural grammars now available has not resulted in more noticeable improvement in students' written English may be that none of these grammars has emphasized the conventions of written English as opposed to those of spoken English. I firmly believe that a real understanding of the structure of written

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[4] Donald R. Bateman, "More Mature Writing through a Better Understanding of Language Structure," *English Journal,* L (October 1961), 457.

[5] Paul Roberts, "Linguistics and the Teaching of Composition," *English Journal,* LII (May 1963), 335.

[6] Charles Carpenter Fries, *American English Grammar* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940), p. 285.

English *can* help students both to write more effectively and also to read more effectively. There is no real reason, however, why a grammar of spoken English should be particularly helpful in teaching a mastery of written English. And yet all existing structural grammars seem to be based on the assumption widely held among modern linguists that language is, to quote Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager, "exclusively . . . a system in which the symbols are vocal sounds."[7]

In order to understand why so many linguists seem to hold this point of view, it is necessary to know something about the origins of structural linguistics.

The basic tenets of structural linguistics were largely shaped by the experiences of anthropologists during the early part of this century. In 1899 Franz Boas became the first professor of anthropology at Columbia University, and for many years he dominated the field of anthropology in this country. From the beginning he was interested in the cultures of American Indian tribes, and—since the language of a people is an integral part of its culture—he inspired many of his students to make detailed studies of American Indian languages. Since the great majority of American Indian languages have no written form, these early linguists had to develop new techniques for analyzing languages; it was inevitable that these should be techniques for analyzing the spoken form of a language rather than its written form. Furthermore, the development and refinement of phonemic theory in this country provided linguists with a powerful tool for analyzing spoken languages; the recognition of the reality of phonemes enabled them to explain at last such phenomena as the fact that speakers of different languages may hear the same sounds differently. Still another factor that has contributed to the emphasis on speech as opposed to writing is the great improvement in the teaching of foreign languages that has resulted from the oral approach to language learning that has been advocated by so many linguists.

Now it is undeniably true, as Bloch and Trager claim, that every language is systematic and is made up of arbitrary symbols.[8] But I cannot agree with Bloch and Trager that a language is made up of only vocal symbols. If this were true, no deaf mutes could ever learn a language since deaf mutes can neither hear nor speak; and yet deaf mutes can learn to read and write. Nor is the statement by Bloch and Trager that "WRITING is a secondary visual representation of speech" true of all languages, although it may apply to some. As L. M. Myers has pointed out,

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[7] Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager, *Outline of Linguistic Analysis* (Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1942), p. 6.

[8] Bloch and Trager, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

> In Popocatapetlese the only writing is the investigator's phonetic or phonemic transcript. This may accurately be described as a mere secondary representation of the language; and since it is completely unintelligible to the natives it exerts no influence on their language, which is indeed "speech and speech alone." But written English, especially since the invention of the printing press, has been exerting an absolutely inescapable influence on the spoken form. Writing may be secondary, but it is not merely a passive reflection of speech, and it cannot be effectively treated as if it were.[9]

Written English has its own conventions, just as spoken English has its own. There is nothing in spoken English, for instance, to correspond to the indentation for a new paragraph that one finds in writing. In written English we can show that we are discussing a person rather than, say, the flesh of an animal, by capitalizing the word *Lamb* in the sentence *Do you like Lamb?* Again, a convention of written English—namely, the placement of the apostrophe—makes it possible to distinguish between books belonging to one son and books belonging to more than one son in the following two sentences, which in spoken English would sound exactly the same:

> Have you seen my *son's* books?
> Have you seen my *sons'* books?

Still another convention of written English, that of spelling, precludes any ambiguity in a question like the following:

> What do you think of Lydia's new beau?

If this question were asked orally, the hearer might take the last word as referring to something that Lydia is wearing. Spoken English does not distinguish between these two words, but written English does. In fact, if the hearer should misinterpret the question, the speaker might well resolve the ambiguity by means of one of the conventions of written English rather than by any use of spoken English:

> "What do you think of Lydia's new beau?"

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[9] L. M. Myers, "Linguistics—But Not Quite So Fast," *College English*, XXIII (October 1961), 27.

"Lydia's new bow? Where? I don't see any bow."
"I mean her new *b-e-a-u*, not her *b-o-w*."

Such conventions as paragraphing, punctuation, and spelling are just as truly conventions of the English language as are different degrees of stress or different levels of pitch. Indeed, as English teachers, we have to be more concerned with the former than with the latter: most English-speaking children have already mastered the stresses and pitches of English by the time they enter first grade or even kindergarten, but they have yet to learn such things as paragraphing, punctuation, and spelling.

The conventions of the written form of a language are just as arbitrary as are the conventions of its spoken form. There is no logical reason, for example, why the combination of letters *-ough* should be pronounced differently in each of these words: *bough, bought, cough, dough, rough, through.* Punctuation marks are also arbitrary. Some languages are written without any punctuation marks at all; many languages lack any punctuation mark corresponding to the comma in English. In some languages such as Burmese and Classical Arabic, writers do not indicate the end of a question by means of a special "question mark," although writers of English regularly do so; writers of Spanish go even further—they place one question mark at the end of a question, and another, inverted question mark before the question. Even the order in which written symbols appear on a page is not the same for all languages: in English we write from left to right, but writers of Arabic write from right to left, while writers of Chinese write in columns, from top to bottom. Our own way of writing seems the most "natural" to us, of course; but neither writing from left to write nor writing from right to left is more "logical" than the other, any more than driving on the right side of a road, as we do in the United States, is more logical than driving on the left side of a road, as they do in England. Both our manner of writing and our manner of driving are the result of historical accidents.

And yet, even though the conventions of written English are arbitrary, they are nonetheless systematic. The detailed explanations that one finds in handbooks on writing are merely descriptions of the conventions of our writing system. There is, for example, less deviation in the spelling of English words than in their pronunciation. And except for an occasional writer like e. e. cummings, all educated users of written English begin their sentences (as well as proper names) with capital letters.

Written English, then, is a system of arbitrary symbols. It is a system with its own conventions, which differ in many important respects from the conventions of spoken English. And yet the system of written English obviously overlaps the system of spoken English since most spoken sentences can easily be "translated" into written sentences and most written sentences can be read aloud as spoken sentences. Thus a language like English comprises at least two overlapping systems: a system of vocal symbols and a system of written symbols.

As a matter of fact, both of these systems have their own subsystems, each with its own conventions. It is a convention of formal written English, for instance, to avoid the use of contractions like *she'll* and *I've* and *aren't;* in informal written English, however, the use of only uncontracted forms would seem stilted and unnatural. Again, it is a convention of formal written English to "write out" numbers up to 100 (e.g., *thirteen, twenty-six),* although most writers would probably use the numerals, instead, in informal letters to friends. Spoken English also has its own subsystems. In one such subsystem, that of conversational English, elliptical sentences commonly predominate: as an answer to the spoken question "Who discovered America?," the full sentence "Christopher Columbus discovered America" would sound much less natural than the elliptical sentence "Christopher Columbus." In conversational English, necessary grammatical signals are regularly omitted from answers if they have been supplied by the preceding questions. But in narrative spoken English such as we use when giving a talk or report, we regularly use full sentences since our sentences do not follow questions and must therefore include all essential grammatical signals. And in formal written English, of course, full sentences—the so-called "complete sentences" of traditional grammar—are the norm, rather than the exception.

A language, then, is not merely one system of arbitrary symbols; it is a set of overlapping systems and subsystems. And just as each system has its own conventions, so each system also has its own "grammar" since a grammar is (or at least should be) simply a description of the structure of some language system.

One of our principal responsibilities as English teachers, it seems to me, is to teach our students the conventions—that is, the "grammar"—of written English. I refer now not only to high school and junior high school teachers, but also to all elementary school teachers who have anything to do with teaching students to read and write Standard English. Most children learn their "native" system of spoken English from their parents and peers; they have already mastered most of the structure of this system by the time they enter school. But the system of written English they learn in large part from their teachers, in school. It is a very unusual child who has learned the structure of the system of written English by the age of five and a half. I cannot agree with Henry Lee Smith, Jr., when he says that

> the learning of the complex systems through which human communication goes on—language, kinesics (or gestures and motions), and vocalizations (the phenomena generally referred to as "tone of voice")—is the greatest intellectual achievement any of us ever makes. And yet these systems are thoroughly learned and internalized by all physiologically human beings in all cultures at about five and a half years of age! Individuals learn the systems at different rates and in different orders, but from the point of view of the culturologist, the important fact is that about 98 per cent of all our species are in full control of the *structure* of their group's communication systems at about the same age.[10]

One of the most important forms of communication in our modern world is the kind of communication that goes on between a writer and his readers. One of the most important communication systems for any literate human being is the system of the written form of his own—or of some other—language. It is only through the systems of written language that writers of a hundred or more years ago continue to communicate with us today. Much of our education and much of our culture is communicated to us by means of one or another system of written language. It is for this reason that a person is not considered to be truly educated until he can read and write. The following passage from Ralph Long's *The Sentence and Its Parts* is a much more accurate statement of the facts, it seems to me, than the passage I have just quoted from Smith:

> There are strong arguments for employing the usual written forms in analysis wherever possible. They are established ways of using the language, precisely as the spoken forms are, and so require attention in themselves. In the schools of earlier generations, two of the "three R's" were concerned with written language and none with spoken. Records and television notwithstanding, it seems safe to predict that in the foreseeable future complex

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[10] Henry Lee Smith, Jr., *Linguistic Science and the Teaching of English* (Inglis Lecture in Secondary Education; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 8-9.

> thought will still be communicated most satisfactorily by the written language. In everyday life also, the ordinary written forms are holding their own: indeed, they are put to more and more uses in supermarkets, for example, where the storekeeper of the past is no longer always at hand, and on superhighways, where increasingly complex directions must be given silently to all who drive by. The usual written forms are easily read; precise phonetic or phonemic transcriptions are much harder to read. The usual written forms do not call attention to matters of regional or personal pronunciation that are irrelevant to grammatical analysis: the ordinary written language is a broadly unifying instrument with a minimum of involvement in the local and individual. The usual written forms both represent and shape the native speaker's view of the structure of his language at many points. Thus the *used* of *I used to like him* is indistinguishable in speech from the *use* of *I didn't use to like him,* but the difference in spelling is jealously maintained for grammatical reasons.[11]

Since the system of spoken English and that of written English overlap, it is not surprising that students tend to carry over patterns of the spoken system which they already know to the written system which they are trying to learn, just as someone studying a foreign language is likely to impose the word order of his own language on the words of the new language. When students who are learning the system of written English are already speakers of substandard English, it is very probable that they will transfer conventions of their substandard English to the English that they write. But it is not so much the conventions of substandard English that plague our students' writing as it is the conventions—or at least, the accepted patterns—of spoken English. As we have seen, elliptical sentences are normal in conversational English but full or "complete" sentences are preferred in formal written English. Again, "sentence fragments" and "run-on" sentences are common in the speech of even the best-educated of us, but we try to avoid them in our writing. And as a transcription of almost any free oral discussion will show, we tolerate false starts, repetitions, pauses, extraneous "words," sentence fragments, and even lack of agreement between subject and verb or between pronoun and antecedent in speech, although the conventions of formal written English do not allow such phenomena.

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[11] Ralph B. Long, *The Sentence and Its Parts: A Grammar of Contemporary English* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 6-7.

But the fact that our students already know the structure of spoken English when they come to us gives us as English teachers a great advantage that teachers of foreign languages lack. We do not have to start our teaching of the structure of written English "from scratch." We can start with those features of English which are identical in both the written system and the spoken system, and can build our teaching around them. We can make use of the fact that our students already know—even if not consciously—those grammatical devices of English which are the same in both systems. One of the big weaknesses of most traditional handbooks is that their writers seem to assume that the students who will be using their books know no grammar at all. Of course, if by "learning grammar" such writers mean primarily the learning of grammatical labels and of definitions for those labels, then indeed most of grammar will be new to our students. But if, instead, a grammar of written English is merely a description of the grammatical units that we use in writing and of the functions of those units and of the ways in which those units combine to form larger units, then our students already know a large part of the grammar of written English.

But it is essential, before we teach written English, that we know which features of English are the same in both the written system and the spoken system, and which are different. Unfortunately the two systems have been so constantly confused that labels which are used for features of one system are also used for features of the other system, even when the features themselves are not identical. A "syllable" in written English, for example, is not the same as a "syllable" in spoken English. It is a convention of written English that when we divide a word containing a double consonent into "syllables," we separate the two consonants, so that the two "syllables" of a word like *minnow* are *min-* and *-now*. But in the spoken form of *minnow* there is only one *n* sound; in spoken English, therefore, the two "syllables" of this word are /min/ and /ō/. Again, "words," as we commonly use the term, are primarily units of written English rather than of spoken English: it is probably only when we see an expression like *have to* or *used to* or *a lot* or *all right* written down, with a space in the middle, that most of us first realize that the expression is made up of two "words." (Some secretaries seem never to have learned that *a lot* comprises two "words"; I have received several letters in which this expression was typed as *alot.)* And is the name for the kind of "tree" on which a person hangs his hat made up of one "word" or of two "words"? Does the name for the time of day when you eat supper—or the name for the time of day when you eat lunch—consist of one "word" or of two "words"? Pronunciation does not help us here; most of us would probably not be sure we knew the right answer until we had consulted a dictionary.

Clearly, a mastery of the system of spoken English will be of little help to the student when he wants to know how to divide a word at the end of a line, or whether to write a compound as one solid word or as a hyphenated word or as two words. For this kind of help, he will have to turn to his dictionary. Nor will his knowledge of spoken English enable the student to determine whether a group of words that he has written with a capital letter at one end and a period at the other really constitutes a "complete sentence." But here his dictionary cannot guide him. Even a traditional handbook will probably be of little assistance to him: the "completeness" of a thought does not necessarily guarantee the "completeness" of a sentence. Nor is an added statement to the effect that a sentence must also contain a subject and a predicate enough: so-called "subordinate clauses" contain subjects and predicates, but by themselves they do not constitute acceptable sentences in formal written English.

And our students must learn to write acceptable sentences—acceptable, that is, by the conventions of formal written English. We need grammars that will teach them how to do so.

I hope that you will forgive my interjecting a personal note here, but I would like you to know how fully I appreciate the difficult decision that faces those of you who have spent many years studying and teaching traditional grammar and who now find yourselves faced with evidence that shows that many of the rules you learned do not fit the facts of present-day English. Like you, I, too, had a very thorough training in traditional grammar, both in high school and in college. And for many years after leaving college, I taught the same kind of traditional grammar that I had learned, both in Turkey and in Afghanistan. But I went even further than that. I spent three summer vacations between 1948 and 1950—and also most of my free moments during the school year 1949-1950—writing a three-volume grammar of English for Turkish students. Needless to say, my grammar was full of such statements as "All words are divided into eight main groups, called the parts of speech," and "Most verbs show actions, but some show merely a state of being." And then, in the fall of 1950, I came to the United States to work for a master's degree—and first heard about linguistics. . . . As far as I know, all the copies of

Volume III of my grammar were sold as scrap paper or else are still gathering dust on the shelves of some warehouse in Istanbul.

Unlike some English teachers, I had always enjoyed parsing and diagraming and the filling in of blanks in sentences. Add to this the many hours that I had spent writing my grammar, and you will understand, I am sure, the reluctance with which I turned my back on traditional grammar. But by 1952 I had become convinced that the kind of grammar I had been taught (and had been teaching in my own classes) did not really help the average student to identify the important units of English grammar and to combine them in satisfactory sentences of his own devising. I therefore welcomed the publication of Fries's *The Structure of English,* the subtitle of which is *An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences.* Five of the thirteen chapters in Fries's book discuss sentences, under such headings as "What Is a Sentence?," "Kinds of Sentences," "Sentence Analysis: Meaning or Form," "Structural Patterns of Sentences," and "'Sequence' Sentences" and "'Included' Sentences."

I admit readily that I learned a great deal about English sentences from Fries's book. But unfortunately, like other structural linguists, Fries believes that "the speech *is* the language. The written record is but a secondary representation of the language."[12] Even the sentences on which Fries based his analysis of English syntax did not include a single written sentence: they were sentences that were "recorded in a university community in the North-Central part of the United States."[13] They comprised "some fifty hours of mechanically recorded conversations on a great range of topics—conversations in which the participants were entirely unaware that their speech was being recorded."

Most of the structural grammars that have been written since 1952 have reflected this same preoccupation with the system of spoken English. Perhaps the best such grammar yet written is Nelson Francis's *The Structure of American English;* but in it we find "the following objective statement" given as the "definition" of a sentence:

> A *sentence* is as much of the uninterrupted utterance of a single speaker as is included either between the beginning of the utterance and the pause which ends a sen-

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[12] Charles C. Fries, *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1946), p. 6.

[13] Charles C. Fries, *The Structure of English* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1952), p. 3.

> tence-final [intonation] contour or between two such pauses.[14]

By this definition, no group of words could be called a sentence until it was actually spoken aloud by someone (with the proper intonation). Nor would the words *Come here a minute* in the following example constitute a sentence if they were spoken with no pause following *minute* (as they often are):

> Come here a minute. I want to show you something.

(In *spoken* English, *Come here a minute* might not be a sentence. But in *written* English it is.) Francis's definition implies that no foreign student can learn to identify or to write acceptable sentences in English until after he has mastered the sentence's final intonation contours of spoken English; but I can testify, on the basis of my own experience, that even students whose spoken sentences do not sound like English sentences to native speakers can learn to distinguish "complete," grammatical sentences from "incomplete," ungrammatical sentences—in written English. As Long points out, "Our sentences can be whispered, chanted, or sung without changing their grammar. They can be written and read by people who lack both hearing and speech."[15]

In his *Grammar for Written English,* David A. Conlin recognizes the fact that, "since written communication is not reinforced by rhythms of sound, punctuation serves instead to provide the reader with clues to syntactical relationships."[16] Conlin's description of English is "for the *writer* and is therefore "focused on the sentence," which one may identify by means of "a number of formal signals . . . .[17] They are: (1) punctuation, (2) subject-predicate structure, (3) finite verb, (4) no signal of subordination, (5) word order, (6) intonation."[18] It is unfortunate that Conlin does not discuss the signals of written English separately from those of spoken English, but at least his discussion of sentences seems more realistic than Francis's.

In order to explain, in terms of intonation contours and other phonological cues, how it is that a reader can recognize sentences on a printed page without reading them aloud, it is necessary to assume that even during the act of reading certain movements take place somewhere in our bodies that correspond to the movements of our speech organs by which we produce or recognize intonation signals. Some behaviorist psychologists seem to have made just such an assumption; Leonard Bloomfield states it as a fact in his book *Language*.[19] As far as I know, however, there is no conclusive evidence to support such an assumption. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that readers who can read at the rate of 1,000, 2,000, or even 3,000 words a minute could possibly utter all the speech-forms on the page before them, either audibly or inaudibly, while reading at such a speed.

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[14] W. Nelson Francis, *The Structure of American English* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1958), p. 372.

[15] Ralph B. Long, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[16] David A. Conlin, *Grammar for Written English* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), p. 6.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. xii.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

But there is one fact which, it seems to me, proves conclusively that a good reader does not base his syntactic analysis of written sentences on phonological cues. I have never seen this fact mentioned in any structural grammar or even in any discussion of reading written by a structural linguist, and yet it is so important that I feel no English teacher or reading teacher can afford to ignore it. Once again I will try to illustrate my point by means of an example. In one of his books Roberts presents the following sentence:

> The people who saw the play frequently praised it.[20]

Roberts suggests that this sentence cannot be cut into its two constituent parts, because it is ambiguous: "We cannot tell," he says, "whether to cut before or after *frequently*. Either of the following might be intended:

> The people who saw the play / frequently praised it.
> The people who saw the play frequently / praised it."

But Roberts seems to have missed the point that an ambiguous sentence like this one is ambiguous only to those who recognize the ambiguity. I once typed Roberts' sentence on a card, and showed it to different readers after first requesting them to read it aloud immediately upon seeing it, without stopping to decide what it meant. Some of those to whom I showed the sentence read it with the "cut" before the word *frequently;* others read it with the "cut" after *frequently*. Admittedly, several readers quickly recognized the possible ambiguity and pointed out that the sentence could also be read in a different way. But some of the readers did not recognize the ambiguity until it was pointed out to them. For such readers, the sentence was

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[19] See Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), p. 285. A 1961 edition is available from Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

[20] Paul Roberts, *English Sentences* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p. 137.

not ambiguous: they saw only one possible analysis, and read it according to that analysis. It was not true of such readers that they could not cut the sentence into its two constituent parts. Indeed, no readers—not even those who had already recognized the ambiguity—ever told me that they could not read the sentence aloud; those who saw the ambiguity merely read the sentence in one way first, and then read it again so as to show the other way in which it could be divided. (Only one person read the sentence so deliberately the first time that her reading of it was ambiguous.)

But the crucial point in the preceding discussion does not relate to the ambiguity of the sentence. The crucial point is that most of those to whom I showed the sentence read it aloud immediately upon seeing it. In other words, they did not pause to read the sentence "inaudibly and inconspicuously" first. This means that they could not possibly have analyzed the sentence syntactically on the basis of intonation contours or other phonological signals. On the contrary, the intonation which they superimposed on the sentence as they read it aloud revealed the syntactic analysis they had already made of the sentence in its written form. They must have analyzed the sentence through their eyes before they could have analyzed it through their ears. Every good reader surely does the same whenever he reads consecutive sentences aloud without hesitating or pausing.

Every good reader also assumes that the sentences he is reading—if they are written in English (and in prose, not poetry)—will fit into the normal "molds" or "patterns" of English sentences with nothing left over. If such a reader were to see a group of words like the following, for instance, he would probably analyze it as ending with the word *building* and would read the sentence aloud in such a way as to suggest that the word *building* was a noun preceded by the demonstrative *that:*

> The contractor has already pointed out that building

He would probably fail to notice the absence of a period after *building,* especially if this group of words appeared at the very bottom of a page. If, however, the reader were then to turn over the page and were to find the following words printed at the top of the next page, with no capital letter to indicate the beginning of a new sentence, he would assume that his first analysis must have been wrong since the writer would not have written a sentence with words left over:

> houses costs a lot of money nowadays.

The reader would probably reread the entire sentence from the beginning and would this time make a very different analysis of the words *that building:*

> The contractor has already pointed out that building houses costs a lot of money nowadays.

But no phonological signals of any kind would have been responsible for the reader's reanalysis of the sentence: indeed, the intonation with which he had originally read the first part of the sentence would indicate that the sentence must end with the word *building.* Only visual signals—the sight of additional words starting off with a small letter instead of a capital letter—would have suggested that the sentence did not end with "building" but had to be reanalyzed in such a way as to account for all the words from "The" up to the final period. And the manner in which the reader then read the complete sentence aloud would not *determine* his analysis of the sentence but would instead reveal the new analysis he had already made.

I believe that we must concentrate on teaching our students to recognize the signals of written English if we ever want them to become good readers. They must learn to analyze sentences syntactically as they see them on the printed page.

I do not mean to intimate that phonological signals are unimportant. They are of primary importance—*in speech.* Our ability to understand spoken sentences depends upon our ability to recognize phonological signals. But I do not believe that the ability to understand written sentences depends upon a mastery of the spoken system of the language in which they are written. I used to know a code clerk in an American legation who was able to translate messages transmitted in code into normal English even though it was impossible to pronounce the coded words. There are scholars who can translate hieroglyphics into English even though they do not know how to pronounce the Egyptian language which the hieroglyphics represented. Written English is "secondary" to spoken English only in the sense that we learn to read English after we learn to speak it. Both written English and spoken English are of prime importance in our country today; no one can say that one is "secondary" to the other except in specific contexts. I know of no convincing evidence to support Fries's claim that "it is extremely doubtful whether one can really *read* [a] language without first mastering it orally."[21] In any event, our students have already mastered the fundamentals of spoken English by the time they reach us; it is our job to teach them the fundamentals of *written* English. For this we need an accurate description of the structure of written English.

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[21] Charles C. Fries, *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language,* p. 6.

I do not wish to minimize the achievements of structural linguists. As James Sledd has said, "The proper study of mankind *is* man, and there is nothing so basic to our humanity as our language."[22] Any facts about our language that anyone can teach us are worth knowing for their own sake, if for no other reason. And structural linguists have made many important contributions to our knowledge about English. I consider Trager and Smith's discovery of the terminal "junctures" or "contours" of English, for example, a contribution of the highest order. And I do not believe that anyone can grasp the true structure of an English sentence without understanding Fries's concept of *levels,* or "*layers* of structure."[23] I do not hesitate to admit my great indebtedness to Fries for much that I know about the English language.

After long and intensive study of structural grammar and structural grammars, however, I have come to the conclusion that most of the now "traditional" approaches to linguistic analysis hold little promise for the satisfactory analysis of written English. And yet, since textbooks are still being written that are based on one or more of these structural approaches, English teachers should know what these approaches are, and also what their shortcomings are. But let me hasten to add, lest I seem to be arbitrary in brushing these "traditional" linguistic approaches aside, that I have tried—honestly tried—to use these same techniques in my own analysis of English. It was only after they had proved unsuccessful that I turned to other, less well-known linguistic techniques, techniques that seem to hold greater promise in leading to the kind of analysis of English structure that could help our students to write better sentences.

By now it should be evident why I cannot agree with Trager when he claims that "a successful syntax must be built" on the "ever-present, complex, yet wonderfully informative system of the phonological marking of phrases and larger groupings."[24] I believe that Long is right when he says that "attempts to base syntax in phonemics have not been successful."[25]

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[22] James Sledd, "Grammar or Gramarye?" *English Journal,* XLIX (May 1960), 297.

[23] Charles C. Fries, *The Structure of English,* Chapter XII.

[24] George L. Trager, Review of Charles F. Hockett's *A Course in Modern Linguistics,* in *Studies in Linguistics,* XIV (Winter 1959), 80.

[25] Ralph B. Long, *op. cit.,* p. 2.

Nor, in my opinion, has immediate-constituent analysis provided us with a satisfactory technique for the description of syntax. Even the adherents of IC-analysis disagree on the way in which they apply such analysis. The "rules" or criteria given by different writers for the division of a nominal into its constituent parts, for example, all seem equally arbitrary. Presumably Fries, Roberts, and Francis would divide the nominal *the King of England* between the first noun and the preposition:

the King / of England.

On the other hand, Rφulon S. Wells, whose influential article "Immediate Constituents" in the April-June 1947 issue of *Language* did much to establish IC-analysis as the basic technique for syntactic analysis, settles upon a cut between *the* and *King* as "the best analysis of that phrase":

the / King of England.

But such linguists as H. S. Sφrensen and Robert B. Lees seem to consider the definite article and the prepositional phrase in such nominals as together forming one constituent. This may be represented in the following way:

the . . . of England / King.

None of the arguments offered by the advocates of any of these three analyses are entirely convincing; there seems to be no justification for accepting any one of the analyses as the only possible one. (I also feel that there is little or no justification for the assumption that almost all English constructions are binary in their structure. I have seen no convincing evidence to support this assumption. On the contrary, in some instances such an assumption would seem to be not only unjustified but even contrary to the facts.)

The technique which Fries uses in his analysis of the different kinds of words is that of *substitution* in what he calls "test frames" or "sentence frames." With the aid of such frames, Fries classifies English words into four large word-classes (which he numbers from 1 to 4) and into fifteen smaller "groups" of so-called "function words" (which he letters from *A* to *O*). Words that function like *and, or,* and *but,* for example, make up Group *E,* while the so-called prepositions make up Group *F.* But a serious shortcoming in Fries's analysis of English structure derives from the fact that he limits his test frames to frames for words. By ignoring larger constructions, he overlooks the possibility of nonfilled positions; as a result, he repeatedly classes together in the same form-class or function-word group words that do not function in the same way. For example, he classes together as members of his Group *A* (the "determiners") such dissimilar words as *all, the,* and *five,* presumably because each of these words can occur in the test frame

__________ concerts are good.

But if one were to carry this kind of analysis still further, one could claim that the words *impromptu, outdoor,* and *jazz* should belong to Fries's Group *A,* too, since each of these words can also occur in the same test frame. Only a frame for a larger number of words will reveal the fact that the words *all, the,* and *five* belong to different lists just as truly as *impromptu* and *jazz* do:

_____ _____ _____ __________ _____ concerts were good.
(All) (the) (five) (impromptu) (jazz)

By far the most serious weakness in most grammar teaching, in my opinion, lies in its emphasis on *words* rather than on larger constructions. This is true even of the kind of grammar to be found in such linguistically oriented books as those by Fries, Roberts, Francis, and others. Fries's *Structure of English,* for instance, starts out with a discussion of sentences but soon reverts to the classification of different kinds of words. For the purposes of writing, as well as for the purposes of reading, the so-called "parts of speech" are among the least important areas in the whole of English syntax—and yet they are regularly allotted the bulk of the space in most grammars.

Indeed, I would go so far as to say that no sentence is made up of words: a sentence is made up of constructions, and it is the constructions that are made up of words, not the sentence. To treat a sentence as a string of words—even words belonging to different form-classes—is to overlook the most significant feature of the structure of the sentence. One of the most pernicious practices in many grammar classes is that of asking students to look for "simple subjects" instead of "complete subjects": there is no such thing as a "simple subject." In the sentence *The Connecticut flows into Long Island Sound,* it is not "Connecticut" that flows—Connecticut is a state and cannot flow—but "the Connecticut." The sentence *A glass is something we drink out of* does not suggest that we drink out of "glass" but rather out of "a glass." ("Glass" is something we make window panes and bottles out of.) Even in the sentence *The hero of the expedition led his men to safety,* it is not "hero" who led but "the hero of the expedition."[26] In the kind of English which *I* speak, it is ungrammatical to say, "Hero led his men to safety" (except, of course, when referring to a person named Hero).

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[26] John E. Warriner, *Handbook of English,* Book One (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1948), p. 186.

It often happens, of course, that a single word substitutes for a construction; the so-called "pronoun" *he* may replace the entire noun-construction *The hero of the expedition* as the subject of that last example:

The hero of the expedition led his men to safety.
He led his men to safety.

But the pronoun then functions in its sentence as a construction-substitute rather than as a word: that is, it functions on the construction level, not on the word level. Even when a nominal—for example, a subject—consists of a single noun, like the nouns *Percy* and *milk* in the sentences *Percy has hurt himself* and *Milk is good for you,* such words function as subjects by virtue of being the only words in their nominals rather than by virtue of being nouns. As soon as modifiers are added to such words, as in the sentences *Poor Percy has hurt himself* and *Fresh milk is good for you,* the *nouns* (e.g., *Percy* and *milk)* no longer fill the subject positions in their sentences; they are now merely *parts* of the subjects of their sentences. This distinction—the distinction between *constructions* and *words* as the basic elements comprising a sentence—is far more crucial in the analysis of English grammar than most teachers realize.

An example or two may help to show the importance of being able to recognize units on different levels. You would all agree, I presume, that there are two prepositional phrases in each of the following sentences:

I put the clock on the mantelpiece between the two candlesticks.
I put the clock on the mantelpiece in the living room.
I wound the clock on the mantelpiece in the living room.

And yet the three sentences differ fundamentally in their structure—and these differences are of crucial importance for the proper reading of the sentences. The first sentence, for example, contains five sentence-units, that is, five units on the sentence level:

I/put/the clock/on the mantelpiece/between the two candlesticks.

The second sentence contains only four units on the sentence level:

I/put/the clock/on the mantelpiece in the living room.

In that second sentence, the first prepositional phrase is *on the mantelpiece in the living room;* the phrase *in the living room* is part of the larger phrase, not another phrase outside it. It is a phrase on a lower level: it is a modifier of the noun *mantelpiece* within the noun-construction *the mantelpiece in the living room.* The object of the preposition *on* in the first sentence is *the mantelpiece;* but the object of the preposition *on* in the second sentence is *the mantelpiece in the living room.*

The third sentence, unlike the first two, contains only three sentence-units (and *no* prepositional phrase on the sentence level):

I/wound/the clock on the mantelpiece in the living room.

Both of the prepositional phrases are now included *within* the noun-construction *the clock on the mantelpiece in the living room,* with the phrase *in the living room* nested inside the larger phrase *on the mantelpiece in the living room.* Even English teachers, I have found, regularly fail to notice the fact that only the first of those three sentences has two prepositional phrases on the sentence level. The second phrase in the second sentence—and both phrases in the third sentence—function on lower levels; they are lower-level units, not sentence-units. And yet, if we are to help our students to write effectively and to read effectively, we must teach them to recognize—and to manipulate—constructions larger than mere phrases and clauses: we must teach them to recognize and to use phrases within phrases and clauses within clauses.

It is in its recognition of constructions as higher-layered units in the grammatical hierarchy of the language that Kenneth L. Pike's concept of "tagmemes" offers one of the most promising approaches to syntactic analysis. A detailed description of "tagmemes" and of tagmemic theory, with many examples from different languages, is to be found in Part II of Benjamin Elson and Velma Pickett's *An Introduction to Morphology and Syntax.*[27] According to Elson and Pickett,

> The description of the way in which morphemes are grouped together in sequence and of their meaningful relationships is accomplished by using units of grammatical arrangement, i.e. tagmemes. The basic notion in the understanding of the tagmeme is that of slot-class correlation. . . . A SLOT is a grammatical position or function (e.g. subject) which is FILLED by a list of mutually substitutable items (e.g. nouns). The list of items which occur in a given slot form a class. The tagmeme is is the unit of grammatical arrangement involved in or resulting from this slot-class correlation.[28]

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[27] Benjamin Elson and Velma Pickett, *An Introduction to Morphology and Syntax* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962).

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Thus in the following sentence, the included clause *if I knew who had made Mary Ann cry* fills the object slot on the sentence level; on a lower level, the included clause *who had made Mary Ann cry* fills the object slot within the included clause introduced by *if;* on a still lower level, the nonfinite clause *Mary Ann cry* fills the object slot within the included clause introduced by *who:*

> The teacher asked me if I knew who had made Mary Ann cry.
> if I knew who had made Mary Ann cry
> who had made Mary Ann cry
> Mary Ann cry

This kind of embedding, or nesting, of one construction in another is an important feature of English; a good writer should be able to compose sentences with this kind of "depth" of structure without losing track of the level that he is operating on at any given point.

This is especially true when the included constructions are used adjectivally, as in the following sentence:

> Anyone who helps us catch the boys who were responsible for starting the fire is supposed to get a reward.
> who helps us catch the boys who were responsible for starting the fire.
> who were responsible for starting the fire

The verb on each level should agree in number with the subject *on its own level.*

Another linguistic concept that promises to help students write better sentences is Noam Chomsky's concept of "transformations," that is, of rules that show how certain kinds of sentences or constructions can be "transformed" or changed into other kinds of constructions. A large number of sentences in English can be analyzed most precisely as transforms of other sentences—and perhaps in no other way. A passive sentence, for example, is obviously related in some manner to the corresponding active sentence; I know of no better way to describe this relationship than as a transformation (although I myself use different kinds of formulas from those used by Chomsky). Again, it seems to me that a sentence like *I heard John calling* must be derived from some such pair of sentences as

$$\left.\begin{array}{r}\text{John was calling .}\\ \text{I heard }(\underbrace{\hspace{6em}})\text{.}\end{array}\right\}\ \text{I heard John calling.}$$

Good writers make greater use of transformed sentences than do poor writers. Even poor writers probably use more transformed sentences in their writing than they do in their speech. A person who is telling a story can avoid monotony by changes in stress and intonation, but a good writer achieves variety largely by means of the skillful utilization of different kinds of transformations. If we were to see the first passage below on a student composition, for example, we would probably rate it as a sample of "poor writing"—or at least as less well written than the second passage below, although the former might well hold our attention in a conversation:

> Another car was parked next to Mr. Clark's car. Mr. Clark had made a dent in the fender of the other car. When Mr. Clark saw the dent, he glanced around nervously. Then he moved his car to the opposite side of the parking lot.
>
> On seeing the dent he had made in the fender of the car parked next to his own, Mr. Clark glanced around nervously, then moved his car to the opposite side of the parking lot.

One of the tasks of a composition teacher is to help his students strive for greater variety in their writing. Transformations are among the most important devices available to writers for achieving such variety.

Perhaps the one technique of linguistic analysis that has proved most useful in helping high school students and even elementary school students to identify sentence units is the technique of testing by "shifting." The application of this technique can best be demonstrated by an example. Both of the following sentences begin with the words *last winter:*

Last winter Joe's parents went to Florida.

Last winter was unusually cold.

To the unsophisticated, the word-groups *last winter* in both sentences answer the question "When?"—but only one of the two is adverbial. The adverbial word-group is the one that must be shifted to the end of its sentence when we change both statements to "Yes-No questions" (i.e., to questions that can be answered by either "Yes" or "No"):

Did Joe's parents go to Florida *last winter?* (Yes.)
Was *last winter* unusually cold? (Yes.)

In the second sentence *last winter* is not adverbial because it cannot be shifted. This capability for shifting from one end of the sentence to the other marks the included clause *as I was going to St. Ives* in the following sentence as also being adverbial:

As I was going to St. Ives, I met a man with seven wives.

I met a man with seven wives *as I was going to St. Ives.*

The shifting test also provides us with an easy way of identifying subjects: if we compare the statement *Last winter was unusually cold* with its corresponding Yes-No question *Was last winter unusually cold?*, we find that the subject is marked off by the two positions of the word *was*. In other words, the subject is that construction around which the word *was* shifts (or "orbits") when the statement is changed into a Yes-No question:

Last winter was unusually cold.
Was *last winter* unusually cold?

(The words that "orbit" around subjects include both auxiliaries and the finite forms of the verb *to be*. For lack of a better term, I call them "X words," and the two positions in every sentence which can be occupied by such words I call "the X positions.")

The shifting tests work with complicated sentences as well as with simple sentences. When we change the following statement to a Yes-No question, for example, we first have to shift the adverbial elements to the end:

> *Late at night, after all the lights in the dormitory had been turned out,* the student who had the room next to mine began pounding on the wall.
>
> Did the student who had the room next to mine begin pounding on the wall *late at night, after all the lights in the dormitory had been turned out?*

If we now change the question into the corresponding emphatic or negative statement, we can identify the two X positions (i.e., the two positions for *did*)—and all the words between those two positions will be seen to constitute a single construction on the sentence level, namely, the subject of the sentence:

Did *the student who had the room next to mine* begin pounding . . . ?
The student who had the room next to mine did(n't) begin pounding. . . .

There is one last device which I would like to describe, a device which has proved to be helpful in getting junior high school students to write sentences of a kind they had not made much use of previously —sentences that are more typical of written English than of spoken English. By teaching the students to make up these sentences correctly themselves, it seems to be possible to teach them to avoid dangling modifiers from the very beginning, instead of having to teach them to correct sentences already containing such modifiers. The device that I refer to is that of cutting a whole sentence into two "half-sentences." The cut between the two halves of a sentence, however, comes not between the subject and the predicate, as in traditional grammar—and as also in all other linguistically oriented grammars—but rather after the first auxiliary. This kind of cutting results in two half-sentences each of which serves as the model for many of the "incomplete sentences" to be found in conversation. For example:

"Been waiting long?" "Yes, I have."	(I have / been waiting long.)
"Like it here?" "No, I don't."	(I don't / like it here.)
"Finished yet?" "No, I haven't."	(I haven't / finished yet.)
"Hurry back." "I will."	(I will / hurry back.)
"Aha! Caught in the act!" "No, I wasn't."	(I wasn't / caught in the act.)

When a sentence containing one of the auxiliaries *am, are, is, was,* or *were* is cut into two half-sentences, the second half-sentence resulting from this cut turns out to be one of the most versatile constructions in English. Once we have taught students the different positions in a sentence, both on the sentence level and on lower levels, we can ask them to make up sentences of their own containing one of the five auxiliaries listed above, to cut their sentences into two half-sentences, and then to make up new sentences using the second half-sentence in as many different positions as possible. For example:

That man was / *crossing the street against the light.*
Crossing the street against the light is dangerous.
I dislike *crossing the street against the light.*
How do you feel about *crossing the street against the light?*
Look at that man *crossing the street against the light.*

Or, by asking our students to take their original sentence and to make up another related sentence containing *the very same subject,* we can teach them how to make up "one-and-a-half sentences." For example:

⎰*That man* was crossing the street against the light.
⎱*That man* was almost hit by a truck.
The man was / *crossing the street against the light.*
crossing the street against the light.
Crossing the street against the light, that man was almost hit by a truck.

Or again:

The freighter was pounded by 40-foot waves.
The freighter broke into two.
The freighter was / *pounded by 40-foot waves.*
pounded by 40-foot waves.
Pounded by 40-foot waves, the freighter broke into two.

Thus, by utilizing the linguistic concepts of half-sentences, of shifting, of transformations, and of tagmemes—and especially the concept of slots or positions, primarily positions on the sentence level (which I call "sectors")—we can apply the findings of linguistic research to the teaching of written composition. And I believe that it is not too much to hope that we will be able, in time, to teach a much larger number of our students while they are still in the elementary grades to write well-constructed sentences—the kind of "complete sentences" that are appropriate to formal written English, sentences with variety, with depth, without dangling modifiers. And then perhaps, in our high school classes, we will not have to devote so much time to the purely linguistic aspects of written composition, but will be able to concentrate on such matters as organization, logic, rhetoric, and creative expression.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION—WHAT IS CORRECT ENGLISH, IF ANY?

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On one occasion I was asked to address a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa on the topic—"What Is Correct English, if Any?" Some of the things I had to say in response to that challenge are repeated in this paper.

What are we to say of the fact that a Phi Beta Kappa committee suggested, to the chairman of an English Department, a title screaming of "bad grammar"? We might well seize upon it as yet another evidence of the decay of our language, heralded on all sides with perhaps increasing intensity—though always, I observe, by one who considers himself no participant in the general degeneration.

In the past ten or fifteen years the shrill cries of alarm over the state of the language have been aimed especially at what are known indifferently as linguists or structural grammarians. This is a very curious thing, it seems to me. If linguistic degeneration is a fact, it is a fact in spite of a very staggering production of books on "correct English," almost none of which are the work of structuralists and not many of which may fairly be said to be the work of linguists, in the widest sense of the word. It is a fact, moreover, in spite of the efforts of countless English teachers, in the biggest pedagogical effort in the history of mankind—most of whom, again, may hardly be called structuralists or linguists. None of the complainers about the evil structuralists have undertaken to assess the extent to which structuralism has affected either the production of books or the efforts of teachers, to say nothing of its measurable influence upon the users of language. To the contrary, as strange as it seems, it is often smugly asserted that the foolish fads of Charles Carpenter Fries (the only linguist known to many of the complainers about the language) haven't come to much. To anyone who has bothered to read a few linguists or structuralists, most of the furor about them has about the same value as science fiction may provide for our friends in the various other sciences.

The newest edition of the Merriam Company's "unabridged" dictionary brought in its train a wide assortment of Cassandras. They ranged from Dwight Macdonald, whose review in the *New Yorker* is a brilliant tour de force, to a school teacher who called me hoping that I wouldn't recommend the purchase of that awful book which advocated the use of *ain't*. Somewhere between were arrayed various journalists and hack writers who became self-appointed lexicographers for the occasion. Yet one must wonder whether any of these things might have been written or said if the authors of them had gone to the bother of considering seriously the problems of the lexicographer—if any, for instance, had so much as read with attention Samuel Johnson's Preface to his 1755 dictionary.

Nobody can deny that in the past two centuries an imposing number of books and a staggering amount of teaching energy have been devoted to the problem of "correct English." And it seems hard to me to deny that in the past decade a very considerable furor has been raised over the alleged degeneration of the language. The increasing tempo of the outcry has led many to suspect that it marks an accelerando of linguistic degeneration. The question suggested for my remarks to our local Phi Beta Kappa chapter—"What is correct English, if any?"—reflects this concern, and suggests, indeed, that perhaps the disease has already claimed the patient.

Despite the fat health of the tradition of deploring the state of the language, I submit that it is pretty largely irrelevant to any important linguistic problem. All the hubbub misses the essential nature of a real problem, for it proceeds from a notion of language which nobody seriously entertains. "What is correct English, if any?" Is it not remarkably odd that a group such as the Phi Beta Kappa, the cream of the intellectual life of a state university, which boasts a faculty from distinguished schools all over the world, men whose distinction rests upon command of the written and spoken language in their publications and their teaching, should ask *anybody* such a question? The question may well suggest a deeper problem, but on the surface it strikes me as patently foolish. I've grown long used, when I'm introduced to anybody—neighbor, businessman, or professor—to such remarks as "Oh, I must watch my English now" and "I didn't study my English enough, I'm ashamed to say" and "English is the most important subject in our schools." Nobody means such statements: nobody really does "watch his English," unless he has nothing of consequence to say; nobody undertakes to study it further; and nobody to my knowledge has ever suggested paying English teachers in direct proportion to the alleged importance of the study. Moreover, faculties in agriculture, arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, and yes, dentistry, law, medicine, and pharmacy continue to fill their respective learned journals without seriously entertaining notions of their linguistic debilities.

The plain fact is that nobody really believes in this long and persistent complaint about the state of our language. Contrariwise, everybody knows very well that the long clamor has been largely irrelevant.

When I first came to Lincoln in 1954, a neighbor, the late Walter Anderson, asked me what I did. I told him I taught English at the university. His reply I shall always treasure, for it was the reply of an honest and mature man. No apologies, no promises to watch his language, no malarkey about the importance of English. "What sort of English?" he snapped. "When I attended the university, I was taught an English I had never before and have never since heard or seen." Mr. Anderson's remark does not solve our problems, I think; but it does allow us to look at our problem with the air cleared.

For we do have a problem, and it is daily borne home to us in our inability to cross disciplinary lines in our course offerings, to read one another's learned journals, indeed, to talk with one another at the faculty club about anything beyond this year's football team, this month's public scandal, or this day's weather. The adyta of the chemist, the mathematician, the psychologist, the agronomist, and to be sure the literary critic remain adamant against intrusion; and every doctoral examination is a lesson in humility to the outsider—or an aggravation of his frustration if he feels that educated men should be able to communicate their learning to one another, as indeed educated men managed to do until the present century. His are not exactly the "Blank misgivings of a Creature / Moving about in worlds not realised" which Wordsworth had in mind; but they are quite as painful, I suspect.

Francis Bacon took all knowledge as his province. John Milton, after graduating from Cambridge, gave himself six years at his father's country home, to learn everything there was to know in 1632. And it seems he managed so to do. Of course, in the seventeenth century the reading of all the books in print could be taken by a genius as a six-year assignment. Nobody today would essay a similar venture. Yet even only a century ago a man of learning did not hesitate to view a wide spectrum of disciplines: the colors of the natural and social sciences, of the agricultural and mechanical arts, of medicine and law, of natural and divine philosophy—all struck his eye as dispersions from a common prism. Intellectual periodicals of the day ranged through his chroma.

Today there is no intellectual rainbow, and certainly no pot of gold at its either end. It is as though God had gone back on his covenant with Noah "and every living creature of all flesh." Or, to move down a couple of chapters, it is as though the building of the modern academic tower has somehow brought with it a confounding of the languages of the builders, "that they may not understand one another's speech."

My hunch is that a chief source of our difficulty does lie in what we may call our language. But it is not in the area of language to which textbooks and schoolmarms have so sedulously devoted themselves for the past two centuries, and not the area of the recent hue and cry. A language, after all, is a vehicle for communicating ideas; and if a language is to be a sufficient vehicle for this task, it must contain sufficient range and power to accommodate the imaginative demands of its users. William Dwight Whitney pointed out a century ago that nobody in his right mind would learn a foreign tongue if his own sufficed for his intellectual purposes: the Greeks and Romans did not study the languages of their "barbaric" neighbors simply because they had little to learn from them. Roman schoolboys *did* study Greek, and, later, European schoolboys did study Latin, and for the best of reasons —access to a culture their own languages did not at the time provide.

We may be foolish to deplore the slow death of the classical tradition in our own schools during the past century or so. The fact is that English has increasingly put at our disposal the knowledge of our civilization. It was not simply that Latin teachers became more preoccupied with declensions and conjugations than with the substance of Lucretius and Ovid that led to the present state of Latin in the American curriculum—though I suspect this eccentric preoccupation may have helped the process along. A need for Latin which was real in John Milton's day is not real today: English now probably can do more than Latin can to justify the ways of God to man.

What *is* deplorable, I believe, is that with the passing of the classical tradition came the end of *any* central curriculum which could provide the language an imaginative stockpile sufficient for the wide and varied intellectual investigations of the past century. Through the nineteenth century, when good men bemoaned the loss of religious faith and quailed before the advances of science, they might have more sensibly focused their apprehensions in another direction. The well springs of our communication system, which had ridden out very considerable shifts of religious and political revolution, were drying up—nay, not so much drying up as being abandoned. The town spring no longer seems necessary when everyone has a cistern in his own house.

Perhaps coincidentally, but I doubt it, there has come increasing specialization of the various disciplines. English teachers have forsaken the "wells of English undefiled" to legislate with Bishop Lowth and Lindley Murray or babble with Brooks and Warren—to suggest but two of a dozen directions. Rhetoricians have abandoned the grand tradition of the classical oration to toy with the least significant of its parts, elocution.

Each discipline, taking with seriousness its incidental jargon, has insanely mistaken it for the standard vocabulary. And there results, in what is miscalled the intellectual community, a plethora of dialects so distinct as to constitute different languages. Indeed, in the criticism of the fine arts, we have reached what the linguist might call the stage of the arrogant idiolect—in his own arrogant idiolect. The polyglot nature of academic talk is sufficiently advanced to keep me ignorant of similar developments in neighborhoods other than my own; but I rather imagine that many of my colleagues in the other divisions of the university find themselves uncomfortably isolated from many aspects of what we outsiders may naively think of as their fields of study.

With this confusion of tongues, it is not surprising that a central curriculum has disappeared from our schools. The child-centered curriculum and the comprehensive high school, both manifestations of educational irresponsibility, are products of our own; and we persist in irresponsibility if we choose to blame the professional educator for them. Lo, the poor educator—his mind *is* untutored; but which of ours is not? Moreover, his job is an impossible one. Professor Madison Brewer used to observe sadly that his elementary teachers were supposed to know something about everything, but he couldn't find anybody of the university staff to introduce these teachers to the various fields of knowledge. All were too busy mastering the newest carcinogenic argot, idiotically superstitious that the latest term, though but a new word for an old concept, might have magic powers. In English grammar we have had no real need for over a dozen new terms in the past half century; but the lingo of successive functionalists, formalists, structuralists, and now transformationalists would fill a fair-sized dictionary. And I am content that my own field of interest is by no means unique in this respect.

I have a hunch that we shall either be buried—and by our own adolescent foolishness—or, overcoming our insecurity, mature sufficiently to build again a common language of educated men. Perhaps an old language—the language which sufficed for that English century of genius, the seventeenth, or the language which sufficed for the seminal century of our own world, the nineteenth—perhaps an old language cannot be revived. But unless we reestablish a language equally ecumenical in the world of the intellect, the central problem of composition will continue to defy us, I fear. If we do manage to establish such a common tongue, many of the lesser problems of composition will substantially disappear. Certainly the nagging problem of "correct English" will fade away; for peers of the realm have never worried over-much about the king's English.

I have a hunch that out our way we are making a start in the right direction with a new English curriculum, which we are working out with the English teachers of Nebraska, our friends in Teachers College, and anybody else who will lend a hand. More than anything else, we have concentrated upon readings of long-tested and wide imaginative appeal—the most energizing myths and stories of our Western heritage—in hopes of providing for students a rich stockpile in common, from which to draw for discussion of the most diverse and penetrating studies. Professor Paul Olson, a medievalist by trade, has shown us that elementary teachers, high school teachers, rhetoricians, linguists, literary historians and critics, professional educators, and laymen can, when facing a real problem with exciting prospects, speak a common language and accommodate our special dialects to an ever widening conversation. The development of a meaningful and productive curriculum has proved the most exciting thing in the academic lives of most of us, I think. We've mangled some case forms, I imagine, and split some infinitives—largely out of a desire to deliver our children from the voodoo which surrounds such things. But nobody as yet has reached for a blue pencil.

Now, all of this may strike you as something removed from my assigned topic, linguistics and composition. But I think it is necessary, however painful, to put our problem in a proper perspective.

For the fact is we English teachers are remarkably myopic about our problems and about ourselves as well. We have so long faced so closely our day-to-day tasks that our eyeballs have got misshapen. We have developed keen eyes for the close at hand but rather misty vision of the academic wilderness we find ourselves in. Hence we have, on the one hand, so fuzzily perceived our forest as a whole that we have felt obligated to recreate it for ourselves and our students—and we have incorporated into the teaching of English broken branches of sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, the physical and biological sciences, and heaven knows what not else, usually unaware of the distortion of our vision of these parts of the groves of Academe. On the other hand, we have scrutinized the immediate trees of our forest so intently that we have come to suspect that some single dryad of the woods will somehow enlighten all the educational forest, and we have recently almost come to suspect that the demigods of linguistics have deposed the old pantheon of our culture. I think it is fair to assert that we have been encouraged in our hopes by some of our linguistic friends, who have promised rather more than they have been able to deliver.

Feeble gods may prove as disappointing as false ones, if we demand of them thunderbolts which they cannot hurl. This is not to say that feeble ones are not better than false ones. It seems quite clear to me that for nearly two centuries teachers and students have prostrated themselves—in worship both dutiful and unremitting—before false language gods. No one should regret the passing of the Bible of Bishop Lowth and the prayerbooks of a host of his priests. They were pretty obviously inefficacious. But we may suffer bitter disappointment if we ask of any linguistic sect more than it can contribute to our salvation. And no linguistic sect will take us all the way to Heaven, by any means.

The various linguistic bibles offered to us nowadays can help, and can help appreciably, I think. But we must from time to time remind ourselves that linguistics can hope to contribute but a part of our total culture. It can contribute, though powerfully, only a part of our teaching of English, quite as our teaching of English can contribute, though powerfully, only a part of the total teaching of composition. We must put on our glasses and see very clearly that *we* cannot teach composition successfully by ourselves: we can succeed only if our entire schools cooperate in the venture; if we labor in an uncooperative system (and with very few exceptions we do), we cannot hope for any high degree of success.

I should hope that linguistics might help us (and our colleagues) in the teaching of composition in several important ways.

First, it may offer us accurate and coherent descriptions of our language. It is important that, if we are going to talk about our language, we talk about it accurately in point of fact. It will not do to tell our students, "People do not say, 'I ain't'," when they hear it each day. It is important that, if we are going to generalize about our language, our generalizations arise from the language as it is and do not go beyond the languages. It will not do to tell the underprivileged child that his loving and thoroughly decent parents do not speak decent English. And it is important that, if we are going to generalize, our successive generalizations square with one another. It will not do to tell our students in composition that ambiguity is bad and the same students in literary study that ambiguity is good.

Second, as a corollary of the first, linguistics may rescue us from a very considerable burden of superstition and questionable subjectivism in our dealing with our language. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this: it is time for us to be freed of the myth of subject and predicate, which arose from the confusion of the linguistic utterance with the logical proposition; it is time for us to recognize that when we say of prose that it is sinewy or lucid or manly we are not offering an objective description; it is time for us to lose much of the prescriptive nonsense which has accompanied the teaching of English for two centuries, such as the fairy-tale distinctions of *shall* and *will*.

Following from these first two ways in which linguistics can help us is a third and more important one. It promises to reduce the time we need to give some aspects of language study. So long as we teach the radically incoherent traditional school grammar—a grammar that was perhaps more or less suited to Latin, but certainly is not to English—we had to spend a good deal of time on it. But a sensible description of the grammar of modern English takes very little time indeed: the teachers of Nebraska have reduced it to three units of junior high study, and other new programs have made similar reductions, I think. The fact is that the grammar of English is very simple, and if it is honestly outlined, we find that it cannot take much of our instructional time, because students understand it readily and can move on to other, more profitable matters.

But finally, and most importantly of all, linguistics has helped bring to teachers of English a new attitude toward the language and toward our teaching of it. Instead of pedantry we find learning; instead of restriction we find freedom; instead of timid caution we find bold exploration; instead of humorless and tight decorum we find a joyful and free sense of propriety. Instead of closed minds we find open ones. Now, this new attitude is of vast educational importance. The linguist, I suspect, will help us ever so little with verb and pronoun forms and only slightly with such matters as dangling participles. But he can aid us in assessing the comparative importance of what we have for years considered important problems. Many of these are not problems worth anybody's serious concern, and the more quickly we stop being seriously concerned with them the more quickly we may be of real help to our students. The harsh fact is that we have produced a generation of linguistic adolescents—perhaps juvenile delinquents—who, in typical adolescent fashion, exhibit deep insecurity about their own language and frustration in their dealing with it. They stammer when they have to speak and bite their pencils when they have to write. They grow into staunch upholders of linguistic standards they themselves do not have; and, being ignorant and hence incapable of a critical attitude, they are often belligerent.

More than anything else, the linguists have preached a doctrine of responsibility and honesty with language. They have not abandoned standards, only false standards. They have not urged that anything *should* go; they have only observed that whatever goes, does go, however short a distance. They have not argued that English is not a rich and powerful vehicle for thought; they have only been candid enough to point out that it is more often than not used less richly and powerfully than it might be. I cannot find much to quarrel with in what the linguists have urged on this score, for I find an eighteenth century linguistic Tory as much an anachronism as an eighteenth century political Tory. It is in point of general attitude toward the language that the linguists have given us much to be thankful for. They have done much to restore us to sanity about a part of our English curriculum which we have viewed insanely through insanely myopic eyes.

There is a story of Casey Stengel which may or may not apply to our present situation. It seems that Casey was watching a rookie trying out in left field during spring training. The young man was hopelessly inept in the field: he misjudged flies, bobbled grounders, and overthrew the cut-off man when he finally got the ball. In a rage, Casey strode out to the young man, snapped the glove off his hand, and bellowed: "Here, let me show you how to play left field!" The first fly that came out Casey underran by some ten yards. The first grounder bounded between old Casey's legs and ran to the wall. The first liner caught Casey smack in the belly. Walking back to the foul line and handing back the glove to the youngster, Casey remarked, "You've got left field so fouled up, nobody can play it."

Some may suspect that we have the teaching of English so fouled up that nobody can teach it. I don't know. But I suspect that we can teach English as soon as we get straight upon what English is and what position of the total subject we know enough about to teach with some sense of assurance. The linguist can tell us things we do not know about the teaching of reading and of spelling and of punctuation; he can show us ways to improve the early mastery of our syntactical forms in writing as well as in speech—in short, I think he can make very sizable contributions to our teaching of English in the elementary and intermediate grades. I'm not so sure that he can help us so well later in the curriculum, and I'm not sure we should expect him to: it is altogether possible that the problems we now face with high school and college students are beyond repair when we get our students. Certainly we have done a bad job of repairing them so far, and it is perhaps not all our fault. There is something radically wrong with teaching the writing of verbal constructions in the high school, perhaps ten years after the students have mastered such constructions in their speech.

The linguist, with the aid of the educational psychologist, can surely help us discover the ways language patterns develop in our students, and hence point the way to the most useful sort of instruction we can give students at various levels of their development. We should encourage him to do so, and we should mind what he says. A number of my colleagues at the university dearly love to teach structural grammar, quite as their predecessors loved to diagram sentences. But I grow more certain with the passing years that what we are offering our freshmen at the university ought to be offered them at about the fourth grade—and perhaps earlier. And if we are true professionals, we should gladly give up what we are presently doing and turn to what we *should* do at our level. At the beginning of our curriculum adventure out in Nebraska, we were given sage counsel by one of our profession's great teachers, Professor Royal Gettmann of the University of Illinois: observing that a truly professional orchestra plays Gershwin as carefully and intently as it plays Brahms—whatever its judgment of the two may be—Mr. Gettmann bade us to prepare ourselves to teach well whatever a sensible curriculum assigned to us as our part of our children's education. If we are determined to teach only what we like to teach best, it will be the most miraculous of accidents if a good English curriculum results.

If the present emphasis upon linguistics results in our becoming acquainted with linguistics and interested in its swelling discoveries, we shall all be the better for our knowledge. But if the present emphasis results in all of us teaching linguistics all the time—or indeed, to our giving to it the time we now give to grammar and usage in our total curriculum—we shall be sorry for it, and, if I may end on a bad pun, our students will be sorrier yet.

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LINGUISTICS FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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While no one who cares about the mental health of children would force feed them intellectual content, many thoughtful adults are convinced that children could without harm and probably with distinct gain learn more in school than many now learn. Teachers, supported by psychologists and scholars from various disciplines, are seeking ways to accomplish this end. Any quest for improved teaching must turn eventually to language skills, which are basic to learning in any field. Useful insights for teaching language and strengthening language skills can be found in the work of recent scholarship in the nature of language and, more particularly, in the structure of American English.

Children learn the basic sound and grammatical structures of English during preschool years. Long before they enter school they speak with meaning and listen with comprehension. School brings the necessity to learn to read language and write it. And since oral language is the basic material for this learning, the more they and their teachers know about language and how it operates, the more easily will children master these new skills.

Children's interest in language is evident to anyone who listens to them. Teachers can capitalize on this interest from the beginning to teach basic ideas about language. As Bruner has argued convincingly in *The Process of Education,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960) any important concept can be taught in some honest form to all age levels. As early as kindergarten or first grade, elementary school children can be helped to develop several fundamental concepts about language, concepts which can be expanded and deepened throughout the years of elementary school.

1. Language is a system of sounds. The children may already be vaguely aware of this because they have heard speakers using different dialects, and some of them may have heard a foreign language spoken. Their attention is called to the relationship between sound and graphic symbol as the teacher writes from the child's dictation the story of the picture he has drawn. Watching the teacher transcribe the

sounds leads the child to awareness of the relationship between sound and symbol in learning to read.

2. The sounds convey meaning only when put together in patterns of words and sentences. Whether the teacher is using a conventional phonics scheme or a linguistic approach to reading, children are quickly aware of the fact that sound or graphic symbols mean nothing in isolation. Learning to recognize and use them in varying patterns in the flow of speech is learning to talk, and recognizing them in graphic patterns is a part of reading.

3. The patterns convey meaning only to the initiated—those who know the language. Children are well aware that some of what they hear an adult say is meaningless to them. The fact that one must have experience which puts meaning into the sounds can be made clear to children in any arithmetic, social studies, or science lesson.

4. Pitch, stress, and juncture are a part of the sound system of the language and help to convey meaning. Long before they come to school, most children have learned quite unconsciously that an utterance by an adult can be a casual remark, an amused appreciation or a warning, depending on the pitch or the position of stress. A question such as, "What are you doing?" can be any one of these. The first grade child's attention can be called to this fact as a problem of human relations or as an aid to interpretation in oral reading.

5. The sounds and their connection with the things they represent is purely arbitrary. Even young children are interested to know that the family dog can be called "le chien," "el perro" or "der Hund" and be recognized by people who speak the language from which the words are taken. Or perhaps closer home, the brook that runs by the house may be called a "run" or a "creek" by friends brought up in a different dialect.

6. The sounds are put together in characteristic designs; these designs can be composed of a great variety of appropriate fillers. The Pennsylvania Dutch child who says "Pa threw the cow over the fence some hay" will be laughed at by many school children because "He talks funny." Children recognize that "Boy the hill up the ran" says nothing but that "The boy ran up the hill" is perfectly clear. Sentences and nonsentences can be recognized early.

Children's play with language can be used to show them how fillers fit into sentence patterns. The preceding example can be changed to "The bus ran up the hill" or "The clouds floated across the sky." Using imagination and initiative to vary sentence fillers would be sheer fun for many children.

7. A language changes; old words may be given new meanings and new uses. There is no end to examples of this fact. The modern use of the word "capsule" is a case in point. Old words can be dropped entirely, and new words are coined of old parts to represent new meanings or new applications of old ones. Mother Goose, a child's first poetry, has examples of archaic expression, and the daily newspaper and telecast furnish examples of newly coined words of different sorts from NASA to telstar.

Concepts regarding language can be introduced and expanded in a great variety of situations and ways if the teacher is alert to possibilities and aware of the value of such teaching.

Linguists have become interested in the teaching of reading and at least three of them have offered definite plans for helping children "crack the code" of written English. Bloomfield's scheme for teaching beginning reading, published by Clarence Barnhart, has been tried with modifications in a few places.[1] The plan proposed by Charles Fries in his book, *Linguistics and Reading*, has been tested in a number of first grades in Philadelphia and will be put into still wider use in the next school year.[2] Both of these plans begin with thorough mastery of the letters of the alphabet and give systematic attention to the commonest of English spelling patterns, consonant-vowel-consonant, and its modifications. From this they move gradually to take in the words whose spelling is less regular. Children are taught symbol-sound correspondences in words, never in isolation and, in the case of the Fries material, major attention is given to contrastive patterns. Neither of these linguists uses illustrations in the reading material for beginners or gives much attention to "reading for meaning" until the child has mastered the reading process.

Henry Lee Smith, Jr., on the other hand, is convinced that children should have a vocabulary of sight words—fifty or more—before working systematically on symbol-sound correspondences.[3] The materials he has produced for beginners contain simple illustrations and a very few sight words to make possible a semblance of story content.

These three linguists and Sir James Pitman, whose *Initial Teaching Alphabet* of forty-four letters is attracting wide attention, seem to be in agreement on one point.[4] All are convinced that, at least in the beginning stages of learning to read, children need a one-for-one correspondence between sound and symbol. One wonders whether, in order to achieve the end they seek, children need to be subjected to material as mechanical and devoid of interest as the material proposed by Bloomfield and Fries. A combination of some of this with a liberal sprinkling of the humor and fantasy of Geisel's Dr. Seuss might be more palatable to children.[5]

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[1] Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence L. Barnhart, *Let's Read, a Linguistic Approach* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1961).

[2] Charles C. Fries, *Linguistics and Reading* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963).

[3] Films produced by the University of Buffalo in conjunction with the National Educational Television and Radio Center.

Some ideas of Fries have exciting possibilities for the teaching of spelling. For more than thirty years, ever since teachers were told that English spelling is "unphonetic," spelling has been taught one word at a time with no attention to the alphabetic nature of English writing. Paul Hanna, of Stanford University, has put more than 17,000 words through intricate IBM processing and finds the spelling amazingly patterned.[6] Less exhaustive studies by others point in the same direction.[7]

An informal study of word lists in five widely used series of spelling textbooks showed that such a simple spelling pattern as the final "ing" is sprinkled through four years of word lists. The motivational value of clustering together a long list of words such as *wing, king, sting, spring* and also the duplicated syllable in *winging, bringing* and *stringing* should be clear. Children need to develop a sense of power in spelling and surely some of it could be developed by clustering together all of the consonant-vowel-consonant words such as *pin, cut,* and *hat,* then adding the double consonant of *bell,* the two-for-one pattern of *back,* then more than one consonant at beginning and end as in *bend* and *blend.* By this time children would be able to spell a good many words and have a key to help with many syllables in polysyllabic words such as *continue* and *committee.* Next would come words in which a silent *e* signalled a change of vowel sound, as in *pine cute,* and *hate.* The possibilities seem clear and logical. Even the words beginning with silent *k* and *g* such as *knife, knock,* and *gnarl* all follow logical spelling patterns except for the silent letter.

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[4] John A. Downing, *Initial Teaching Alphabet* (New York: The Macmillan Company).

[5] Published by Random House, Inc., New York.

[6] Jean S. Hanna and Paul R. Hanna, *Phoneme-Grapheme Relationships Basic to Cues for Improvement of Spelling* (Study in progress, Stanford University, Stanford, California).

[7] Robert O. Boord, *Application of the Alphabetic Principle of the English Language in the Presentation of Spelling Vocabularies of Five Widely Used Spelling Series* (Doctor's thesis in progress, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana). See also Virginia French Allen, "Basic Concepts in the Application of Linguistics," *On Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Series II,* ed. Carol J. Kreidler (Champaign, Ill. National Council of Teachers of English, 1966).

With the help of linguists, the sequence of spelling lists might be vastly simplified so that spelling could be taught in far less time than is now the case. And this saving could operate whether a teacher was committed to teaching words as children needed them in their writing or to following a prescribed list.

The third area in which the linguists have help for the teacher is the teaching of grammar.[8] Children enjoy manipulating language. Instead of teaching parts of speech and abstract definitions and rules, teachers could borrow and apply in a simple form an idea that stems from Chomsky. Taking an occasional sentence used in the class, the teacher could help children find its basic "kernel" and build about it a variety of sentences. To a kernel such as "John ate," "Susan made," or "Daddy bought" the children could add elements telling what, where, when, why, and how the action took place. Attention could be called to movable and immovable portions and to the variety of possibilities, from a simple sentence such as "Yesterday Daddy bought my brother a new bicycle for his birthday" to "Last night at a picnic in the park, John greedily ate so much food that he was sick."

All that can be done to help children with reading, spelling, and grammar is certain to help with the teaching of writing, the most difficult of the language skills. The more children know about language, the more interest they will find in it as a human phenomenon, and the more motivation they will have for mastering the skills of communication. Unquestionably, the more teachers know about language the better they will teach it.

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[8] Ruth G. Strickland, *The Contribution of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing, and Grammar in the Elementary School* (Bulletin of the School of Education [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, January 1964]).

IMPLICATIONS OF LANGUAGE PROCESSES FOR THE TEACHER

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Essentially Americans are pragmatic. We take relatively little pleasure in theory for its own sake. Before long, certainly, we are likely to ask where all this is leading and to what conceivable use it can be put. Since we have been spending the day discussing certain concepts and working methods basic to linguistic science, I am certain that these questions have occurred to you, not once but many times. I shall not attempt a full answer to them this evening, but I shall deal with the implications of certain language processes for the teacher of English.

In doing so, I find it most convenient to begin on a negative, or at least a cautious note. The reason for this lies in part in the strange circumstance that linguistics, after having been ignored by the language-teaching professions for so many years, is now in some danger of being oversold. Currently the expectations from it may be greater than the facts actually justify.

Using Linguistics: An Assessment

First of all, let me dispel any hope that a knowledge of the structure of English on the part of our pupils will solve any problems of motivation toward writing. The ability to expand noun modifiers will not provide any teacher with a bag of exciting theme topics or any students with the itch to enlarge upon any one of them. How do you get your students so steamed up, so excited that they are bursting to communicate, that their fingers itch for a pencil? Whatever the answer may be, I would be the last to claim that linguistics will provide it.

Furthermore, I doubt very much that linguistics as such will produce imaginative and original approaches to what are so frequently dull and time-worn topics for writing. The treatment of a theme topic is not likely to be much better than the topic itself, and this depends upon the originality and intellectual vigor of the teacher as much as anything else. He cannot expect, except within rather narrow limits, linguistics to breed a joy in playing with ideas.

Finally, I do not believe that linguists are equipped at the present time to be of much help in analyzing or in furnishing guidance with respect to paragraph structure, to large-scale organization, or to matters of style. In general, linguistics has confined itself to the study of units no larger than the single utterance. It has done relatively little, except for Zellig Harris's occasional forays into discourse analysis, with larger blocks or stretches of language.

I make these caveats in the interest of caution. I have no intention whatsoever of denigrating a subject which interests me profoundly, one upon which I have spent a great share of my total academic effort, and one which I consider to be of vital importance in the study of mankind. I believe, however, that it is important for the English-teaching profession to see things in their proper proportion and not to place a false trust in linguistics, or in any other discipline for that matter.

Expectations for English Teachers

Having indicated some of the things which I do not believe linguistics is in a position to do, I shall approach the subject from another, somewhat more positive angle. Let us recognize realistically certain reasonable limits to what we as English teachers may hope to achieve in our lifetime, particularly with respect to language. Let us then try to visualize some of the situations implicit in this view of our subject and to see what this means with respect to the way in which we shall have to work.

Here again I must begin with a statement which is essentially negative. I doubt very much that we shall produce in our country and in this century a generation for whom distinguished prose is a natural mode of expression. Unfortunately, there are too many social and cultural factors working against us. Nor do I believe that we, in our time, shall succeed in developing a public whose taste in hailing the stylistically good and rejecting the stylistically bad is virtually instinctive, like the German and Italian reaction toward music or the French toward art. As a people we are essentially lacking in a sense of and an appreciation for prose style, and I see little possibility that this shortcoming will be remedied.

The best that we can hope for, and indeed this would be no small achievement if we succeeded in it, is to create a public taste for language that will demand directness, economy, clarity, and precision, a taste that will be impatient with blurred expression and fuzzy tautologies, one that will laugh jargon out of court. Let me repeat, even this would be a considerable improvement over the general level of public taste at the present time. If it were accomplished, virtually every advertising writer and every political speaker would have to alter his mode of expression if he hoped to be taken at all seriously. The authors of most newspaper editorials would have to proceed about their business more cautiously than they do at present, and directors of public relations would be scouring the bushes for a new breed of writer.

If we are to accomplish this, we must convey to our students the attitude that the English language is a medium which is within their power to control if they learn enough about its behavior and structure. They must not look upon the language as a Procrustean bed into which they must fit, cut, and trim whatever they have to communicate. At this point my optimism begins. I believe that it is within our power to produce such an intelligently articulate generation. But if we are to do so, much will depend upon the attitude toward language which that generation encounters in the English classroom. It is at this point that language process, the topic of my address this evening, does enter into the picture.

Language as Evolution: The Teaching Process

Let us consider first the process of *transmission.* How is language passed on from one generation to another? The answer is simple. It is conveyed orally, from parent to child, reinforced by brothers and sisters, then playmates, and finally school. We must remember also that before the child ever enters kindergarten he has acquired virtually the entire sound system of the language, at least the regular inflectional patterns, if not all of the occasional departures from them, and the syntactic structures in their barest or minimal forms.

My purpose in reminding you of this is to prepare you for the basic point that I want to make here. There is no such thing as original sin, linguistically speaking. Children produce solecisms, such as the double negative or *me and him* as subject, neither from instinct nor native perversity. The departures from accepted usage which you in the classroom encounter in their language are not their creation. They are features of English which have been passed on to them by speakers of substandard dialects. We must remember also that for every sub- or nonstandard feature to which you object in their speech, they have acquired scores of patterns in which standard and nonstandard coincide. These do not attract your notice, but they represent language that has been learned, language that is acceptable.

There are two lessons to be gained from recognizing this. First, we must come to realize the degree to which such constructions as the double negative are rooted in linguistic tradition, although admittedly it represents a feature of current usage which we as English teachers do not and should not approve. Nevertheless this construction, spoken by one of your pupils, is simply the end product of a process of oral transmission through a dozen generations since double negation ceased to be standard English, and three times as many before that. Certainly I sympathize wholeheartedly with the attempt to eliminate these linguistic social class markers. Nevertheless, in order to do so, we must recognize the strength of the behavior patterns with which we are dealing. The second lesson to be gained from this is the suggestion that we shall accomplish far more by working positively rather than negatively; I shall have more to say about this later.

We must also recognize *diversification* as a linguistic process with implications for us. In general, the dialects of a language reflect both the vertical stratification of society and the horizontal and geographic spread of its regional cultures. In short, any language with a fair number of speakers is likely to have both regional and social dialects. We need not concern ourselves about the language processes which produce these dialects. For the most part they are the same processes which are involved in and account for diachronic change in the standard form of the language. But for us the implications of diversification as a language process are two-fold.

We must realize first of all that in every country at some time in the past, a combination of social, economic, and political circumstances gave prestige to what was in origin a particular regional dialect, elevating it to the position of a regional standard. This is what happened to the dialect of London in England, to the dialect of the Ile de France in France, to that of Florence in Italy, and to that of the province of Castille in Spain. It would be difficult to maintain that the linguistic resources of any of these dialects were inherently better or worse than those of any of the other regional dialects current at the time.

It follows, therefore, that as we teach the standard language, what we are doing in effect is to try to get the vast majority of our students to substitute this prestige dialect for the one which they have learned as children, and which they may continue to hear constantly in their out-of-school contacts. I grant that this is a somewhat unorthodox way of looking at English instruction, but from the point of view of the linguistic geographer it is quite justified.

In the United States at the present time the situation is even more complicated. Sociologists regularly characterize our society as upwardly mobile. In fact, many of them choose to think of our social structure as a continuum rather than a series of layers—a continuum, however, in which everyone recognizes his position relative to others. As a consequence, standard American English is nowhere nearly as clearly set off from the local patois or certain regional forms as is currently the case in France, Germany, or Italy. In fact, the standard language is by no means as clearly differentiated from other social dialects in America as it is in England. No American linguist could do for the English language in his country what Nancy Mitford attempted to do for the English of Great Britain in her book, *Noblesse Oblige*, namely to define a series of linguistic markers which unmistakably differentiated or identified a speaker as a member of the upper class.

For this reason any definition of the specific features of standard American English is bound to be difficult. A vast amount of disagreement as to what constitutes the standard is inevitable. In the past, teachers of English and writers of the textbooks which they use have tended to be far too censorious, too negative, too unrealistic. They have too often given the impression that a competent command of the standard language is virtually impossible to attain. If we are to deal with the language at all realistically, we shall undoubtedly be forced to overcome our prejudices against and dislikes of certain features and practices which displease us but which are undeniably a part of standard English. Without question, this will cause considerable pain and result in much wringing of hands. Nevertheless, if we set out on this course we may well find that fewer students will leave our classes with anxiety neuroses about their language and that more of them will be comfortable with it.

From Speech to Writing

I shall call the third language process *compensation*. I use this term to refer to ways in which the written language must necessarily make up for features of the spoken language which it does not signal adequately. These include stress, intonation, hesitation pauses, the possibilities of self-interruption and beginning over again. In written English this compensation takes the form of a greater regard for logic, a necessarily greater concern for the placement of modifying elements, a more frequent use of subordination as against coordination. This does not necessarily make of written English a medium superior to its spoken counterpart. It results in a different medium, a medium, we might almost say, lacking one of the dimensions of the spoken language.

If in our teaching of writing, insistence upon the tightness of organization is presented in the light of this kind of understanding of the communication process, it will make sense to the student; it is likely to be more effective than a series of haphazardly presented rules.

Growth through Understanding Language Processes

Pattern extension is the last of the processes I shall present for your consideration. Under this head I include analogy, the creation of compounds and derivative forms, and, somewhat more loosely, such processes as functional change, back formation clipping, and word blending. An understanding of these and the way in which they operate has chiefly diagnostic value. It enables the teacher to understand what is back of some of the strange concoctions that her pupils produce from time to time. I realize that an explanation is not necessarily a cure, but it can lay the foundation for an interest in language and for a positive approach to a mastery of the language as well. The latter, I should like to repeat, is the most important ingredient in developing in the student a sense of comfort with the language, a sense of control of it as a medium rather than something which controls him.

I can best illustrate what I mean by a positive approach by giving an account of the school experience of one of my own children. Recently she wrote a review of the book entitled *The Silent World*. In it she had written the sentence, "You can expect the unordinary under water." This sentence was criticized for faulty diction on the ground that unordinary was not a word because, so the teacher said, it did not occur in the dictionary. Being a child of mine, she straightaway consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary* and discovered not only that the word was recorded there, but that it had been used in English as early as 1547 and as late as 1909. At this point, the teacher somewhat grudgingly withdrew her criticism. Unfortunately by making this a question of whether or not the expression was permitted by authority, the teacher simply challenged the child to pit one authority aginst the other. Consequently little or nothing of any value came out of this episode. Had the student been invited to develop for herself a synonymy of such formations as *unordinary, out of the ordinary, extraordinary,* and *unusual,* the result could have been positive rather than negative.

To conclude, what we must strive to develop is a generation of students who will approach language with sentiments and feelings other than those of anxiety and frustration, a generation of students who will not shrink from the pencil when asked to draft a statement about something or other and who can draft one which will express with clarity and precision what they want to say. A calm, reasoned, and sane attitude toward language can be one of the greatest forces in bringing this about. You, as custodians of the language, can be one of the most vital factors in developing this sanity.

The Language
Curriculum

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN THE CURRICULUM

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Not long ago I had occasion to visit a freshman English class which was using one of the sourcebooks that have become so popular. Taking off from one of the topics treated in the sourcebook, the young instructor spent the entire period in an authoritative disquisition on the United States Constitution in particular and constitutional law in general. This was interesting, if disturbing. The young man apparently had prepared his discourse with care, and the students listened with some show of attention. What was disturbing, of course, was the fact that the instructor was not an authority in political science and that the class was a class in a department of English.

I recall that several years ago a textbook used in first-year English tempted so many instructors to become amateur philosophers that the department of philosophy registered an official protest to the dean of the college, and attention to mass communication in another freshman course aroused the wrath of the head of the school of journalism, who also complained to the dean. Much longer ago, when I was teaching at Michigan, the use of *The New Republic* in freshman English classes stimulated such dogmatic political theorizing by the instructors that the department of political science officially protested to the administration.

Despite the growing use of the sourcebook, the standard collection of freshman readings is still popular and pervasive. It still exhibits its variety of topics ranging from campus orientation to religion, with liberal education and the pursuit of learning sandwiched between.

But the range to be found in freshman English is slight compared with that in the secondary schools. Professor J. N. Hook recently recalled that a professor some twenty-five years ago made a list of all the aims of English teaching that he could find anywhere in print. He discovered a total of 1,481. These aims ranged from "Improve character" through "Teach appreciation" to "Teach the evils of alcohol. . . ." Hook adds that if this listing were to be brought down to date it probably now would include several hundred additional items, including sex education.

Defining the Curriculum

This making English the wastebasket of the total curriculum was a principal concern of the members of the Basic Issues Conferences in 1958. Of the thirty-five issues which they arrived at, the very first one is simply this, "What is 'English'?" The report states, "We agree generally that English composition, language, and literature are within our province, but we are uncertain whether our boundaries should include world literature in translation, public speaking, journalism, listening, remedial reading, and general academic orientation." Then the report asks, "Has the fundamental liberal discipline of English been replaced, at some levels of schooling, by *ad hoc* training in how to write a letter, how to give a radio speech, manners, dating, telephoning, and vocational guidance?" Except for the implication that college teaching is free from this sort of thing, this is a very good question. As I have indicated, we are not so pure in college, either. And I might add that one of the freshman anthologies on my shelves has Dating as its first section and that another has a section on Choosing a Career.

More recently the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board addressed itself to this issue and produced the following definitive statement:

> The three central subjects of the English curriculum are language, literature, and composition. . . . The study of language should permeate all the work in English; specifically, it should include (a) spelling, (b) the enrichment of vocabulary, less through word-lists than through attention to the contexts of literature read and compositions written, (c) systematic study of word derivations and change in word meanings, (d) mastery of the forms of usage characteristic in the spoken and written discourse of educated people, (e) some competence in modern linguistic analysis through the study of modern English grammar. Such study should be both for use in speaking and writing and for the pleasure that comes from acquisition of knowledge.

The CEEB considers, then, that knowledge about the language is worth acquiring for its own sake.

Two distinguished speakers also have addressed themselves to this issue, "What is English?" That was the title of the speech made by Archibald MacLeish at the 1961 NCTE convention in Philadelphia. Although MacLeish discussed warmly the value of the teaching of literature, the subject itself he left as amorphous as he found it. It was also the title of the speech made by H. A. Gleason, professor of linguistics at Hartford Seminary, at the 1962 Chicago convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Gleason spoke more to the point. He insisted that English is a language, and that the basic subject of English is language.

Now the CEEB report and Gleason have something in common. They look in the same direction, but Gleason looks farther. The CEEB Commission accepts some English language content as valuable as an end in itself. Gleason would accept not only the whole range of English language content as valid subject matter for the nonspecialist but would also insist that the features of language itself, the basic principles of linguistic study, are the valid content of English.

I wish to return to Gleason later. First we might observe that the acceptance of the English language itself as valid content for English classes is not new. At the University of Michigan in 1925 Professor Charles C. Fries impressed me—and other summer session graduate students—with his declaration that the English language is a proper content for the freshman course. A month or so later I tried this out with George Philip Krapp's *Modern English: Its Growth and Present Use* as one of my two textbooks. Later I switched to Jespersen's *Growth and Structure of the English Language*. This experience, as a matter of fact, so convinced me of the value of Professor Fries's viewpoint that at an apparently most unpropitious time I read a paper at the St. Louis NCTE convention advocating that the English language be the basis of a really comprehensive freshman course which would include both speaking and writing. I say "unpropitious" because back there in 1938 the educational climate was not yet warm enough for this idea to germinate. It is true that the Minnesota Communication Program, established in 1945, increasingly incorporated English language as content in its first quarter's work, but this continuing experiment too was ahead of its time.

What has warmed the climate is precisely the work of such people as Gleason and his immediate predecessors in the field of linguistics. This work you have been hearing about and discussing this week, and I shall not bore you with reviewing the basic contributions of Bloomfield, Trager, Smith, Hill, Hockett, Fries, and now Chomsky, and the others who have made linguistics a new and exciting discipline. As Roberts and W. N. Francis, Donald Lloyd and James Sledd and Harold Whitehall and others have utilized the linguistic research in applications for teachers and teaching, new doors have been opened.

As recently as a decade ago such an institute as this could hardly have been planned, and, if planned, would surely not have drawn you here for a week. You have entered the new doors. This week you have considered language as content: its nature, its relation to the skill of reading, its relation to the theory of usage, the function of the dictionary, and the relationship between linguistics and composition.

New Programs

These very topics almost suggest the expansion of the topic I have this morning, the role of language in the curriculum. Perhaps you already here have outlined what the role can be, should be. I say "can be," for some long first steps have been taken in the direction of defining that role in these particular terms. One step was taken in Portland, Oregon, where a Ford Foundation cosponsored comprehensive citywide curriculum study some years ago led to the creation of several new curriculums in various fields. One is English. The initial investigation and inventory came up with the recommendation that in a new English curriculum the English language be included as content to be studied as a liberal subject in its own right. The following summer, 1961, Professor W. N. Francis went to Portland to lead an intensive materials-construction project involving both visiting specialists and a large number of Portland teachers. The resulting curriculum was put into the classroom the next year. From what we have seen in Portland classrooms, the curriculum is serving both students and teachers well.

This is the language content in the four-year senior high school Portland sequence: the nature of language, the structure of the English language, the history of the English language, English lexicography, usage, and American regional English. These topic areas are treated, I think, as distinct units suitable for assignment to certain years in the sequence. The unit on structure, for instance, is placed in the ninth grade. Once having completed such a unit in a given grade, the student has presumably learned as much of that particular subject area as he can or should get in secondary school.

Another step was taken a few years ago when the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English formed a committee, which, at the request of the state department of education and with the support of a grant from a private foundation, produced a state curriculum guide that included the English language as content in the high school years, with similar attention to structure, history, and usage.

The Nebraska material is being incorporated in large measure in the larger study being undertaken at the University of Nebraska through a grant from the United States Office of Education. This grant established in Lincoln one of the curriculum development centers in the country. As I think you know, the general plan for these centers was denominated "Project English." No two centers have the same objectives, except that all are concerned with improving the English school curriculum. Several, like that at Nebraska and those at the University of

Oregon and at Hunter College, deal with language as related somehow to the immediate focus of attention, but only one, that at the University of Minnesota, puts it at the center of the focus. Because of this I'd like to read something from our original application to the United States Office of Education. Part of this is extremely familiar to you, I realize; but I think you might like to see the basis upon which our own five-year project has been established. It is most relevant to my topic today and to your presence at this institute this week. It is so relevant, indeed, that if I were to expand it, it could well be my paper this morning. I am going to read the equivalent of about two pages of this application, from the opening section entitled The Problem.

> Linguistic scholars have developed an extensive body of knowledge (information and concepts) about language, and a quantity of reliable information is available to the mature student of language. Little of this body of knowledge has penetrated the secondary school curriculum, however. Few colleges require or even offer a systematic course for prospective teachers in the nature and structure of the English language. Information long known to linguists has had little influence on attitudes and instructional techniques of teachers. At present only two texts specifically devoted to the structure of English are available for use in high schools. Even these do not provide the unsophisticated teacher with the background for a systematic approach to instruction in language, nor do these two sources provide a sequential program of instruction for secondary school students. Information about language known to psychologists, philosophers, and anthropologists has had even less impact on the high school curriculum.
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> To be sure, official recognition of some aspects of this problem has recently occurred. . . . [The report then refers briefly to the recognition by the Commission on English and by the Portland survey.]
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> Characteristically, then, present instruction about language is incomplete and disorderly, with the result that reliable knowledge about language is not widely shared. Secondary school students receive "bits and pieces" of knowledge which do not provide a reasonably complete view of the nature of language and the ways in which language functions. High school students may know some concepts about standard usage or prescriptive grammar; typically they know little about the insight brought to the study of language by descriptive linguists and nothing about its extensions through transformational grammar, or about the systematic structures which characterize language. They may have some notions about the way in which language is adapted to its end in acts of exposition and persuasion, but they lack any systematic study of rhetoric, or of the theory of expository or persuasive address. They may have some ideas about critical thinking, or about the scientific method as reflected in discourse of all kinds, or even be able

to identify some of the commonplace linguistic fallacies. But they are unlikely to have had any systematic instruction in logic, even though the bits and pieces about critical thinking and fallacies tend to be derivations of the study of logic. They are likely to have little or no understanding of the relationship between the development of speech and the nature of man, or between language and culture.

If systematic knowledge of the language is unavailable to secondary school students, it is equally unavailable to college students and almost nonexistent for students in elementary schools. Specialization of language study has fragmented the systematic study of discourse provided in classical education through the trivium of grammar, logic or dialectic, and rhetoric. The knowledge about language in the last half century has been developed through the work of many disciplines, with students of linguistics, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, speech, psycholinguistics, and literature all contributing to the expansion of knowledge. The specialization of the study of language and literature which has occurred in higher education has brought the familiar problem that such knowledge is not readily available in any synthesized form to college students. The reciprocal effect on the secondary school curriculum has been that even the best prospective teachers of English and speech often bring to their teaching a narrow and highly specialized view of the nature of language. The "bits and pieces" of knowledge represented in their own specialized studies are reflected in the "bits and pieces" of instruction about language in the secondary classroom.

To replace the disordered and fragmented instruction about language, instruction in the skills of speaking, reading, writing, and listening should proceed *within the context of instruction about language.* It has been too long assumed that students need "know" only those prescriptions immediately applicable to classroom exercises in the communication skills. The result has been that students have come to know little about language, and much of allegedly "known" does not represent any real understanding of the nature of language. It is probable that lack of attention to systematic instruction in language has frustrated the development of communication skills. For example, the student who sees the development of new habits of of usage as the search for control over a new "dialect" is quite likely to make better progress than one who is told that the dialect which serves his family and community is wrong, and that he must now learn to speak and write "correctly."

With the body of information and concepts about language now available, it seems quite clear that a team of dedicated scholars representing diverse academic disciplines and sound pedagogy can establish the relevant frames of reference within which the informational and conceptual learning about language could proceed in an orderly way. Such frames of reference are: (a) nature of language (as viewed by the psychologist); (b) structure of language (as viewed by the linguist); (c) the history of language; (d) the problems of meaning, reference, and proof; (e) major forms within which utterance takes place (literature and its genres, persuasive

> and expository discourse and its genres); and (f) media influences on form and function. Relevant concepts developed in the field of psycholinguistics and encompassing concepts from both (a) and (b) will be included.

You will have noted that in our thinking at Minnesota we went on from the position advocated by the CEEB Commission on English to a position which we were happy to find eloquently supported by Professor Gleason in his subsequent Chicago address.

I suppose that very informally our thinking could be outlined as something like this. If we take into account all the various activities that are subsumed under the rubric "language arts," we find that this term "English language arts" is really not inapropos. The youngster learning how to conduct a telephone conversation, or to write a business letter, or to talk in a group discussion is learning how to choose and manipulate language appropriate to a situation.

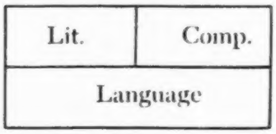
Language as the Focus

The common thread, the central fact, is concern with language, with the English language in particular. In the school, however, this concern is typically manifested in terms of attention to a specific overt act—a given assignment, exercise, or drill, and not in terms of the language knowledge presumably at the basis of the overt act. Neither the student nor the teacher is supposed to know anything about why the language operates in different ways or how it operates.

Now let's go on from the broad area of language arts to look at the frequently proposed triad of language, literature, and composition. We see that in the usual proposal or statement there is nothing to indicate that we have anything but a tripartite grouping of three discrete subjects. Yet only a little consideration should impel our recognition that, on the contrary, these three have quite a different relationship. We do not have three discrete and coordinate entities like faith, hope, and charity.

True, at first glance the technical writing student trying to explain in 600 words how an electric battery is constructed may appear to have little in common with the student trying to understand Chaucer's Prologue. But each one is dealing with problems in the use of language, problems of syntax and problems of vocabulary. Instead of a triad of equal but disparate entities, which might be represented like this,

we actually have a relationship better diagramed like this:



in which the language, while retaining its own discreteness, is also the foundation upon which study of composition and literature rests.

The fact of the relationship is not obscured, but rather is thrown into conspicuous high-relief, by two unhappy circumstances. One is that in practice the modicum of language information found in the teaching of composition has been both inadequate and unsound. Composition teaching has suffered because of this. The other is that except for attention to archaic English as in the study of Chaucer or Shakespeare language information drawn from modern linguistics has not been generally used in the study of literature. And literature teaching has suffered because of this.

Professor W. N. Francis said recently, "The task of literary interpretation and explication may be much aided by grammatical analysis. To work out the syntax of a difficult passage of prose or verse will not automatically remove its obscurity, but it will clearly define the boundaries within which interpretation must contain itself. Yet," Francis continued, "it is interesting to note that we can hardly ever use this tool with the average student—or with the average English teacher, for that matter. He simply does not know enough grammar. A knowledge of a sensible and realistic syntax of English on both sides—the teacher's and the student's—would be immensely helpful. . . . Yet, as a regular reader of *The Explicator*, I can't remember a single article in that excellent little journal that makes use of syntactic analysis in the explication of a hard poem. Structural linguistics can supply us with a syntactic system for English—with several alternative systems, in fact—but it is up to us to make use of them. In order to do so," Francis concluded, "we must first learn them ourselves and then teach them to our students."

But, we agreed, language is more than the common element in composition and literature. It is itself a subject for our attention and our study. It can provide the foundation for the teaching of writing; it can be the base for the initial approach to a literary document; and in its rich complexity it can be—and we feel should be—substantive and central content in the English curriculum.

Here I should like to go back to Professor Gleason's address at the CCCC meeting in Chicago. In his own discussion of a language-centered curriculum he said that there should be three points of emphasis: the understanding of language, the manipulation of language, and the appreciation of language. "These," he said, "might easily be taken merely as new terms for the familiar trichotomy. But I select these terms because I think the implications are somewhat different. While each of them seems to center in one of the existing subdivisions, they all overlap in some measure all the present headings. They symbolize something of a closer drawing together of the components of the curriculum."

Now if we accept the position that language—with English as its particular form—is our basic content, we face finally the problem of where and how to incorporate it.

Undoubtedly the first attention to language as content should occur in the elementary school. It happens that our Minnesota project is limited to the junior-senior high school range, so that naturally we must begin with the seventh grade and try to construct and test a sequential English curriculum with language as its central content. This is our job.

There are implications of such a curriculum. Not only does it call for materials; it also calls for teachers. Inservice experience and summer institutes and workshops will be needed. The teachers of tomorrow must be given better training. We must follow the lead of Ohio and New York and the other states that have raised certification standards for teaching English.

I insist that the future for English teaching is a professional future. It is a future toward which we must work as a professional group if we are to fulfill our whole responsibility to the boys and girls we teach.

THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO A TEACHER WHO KNOWS

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In American schools children study English more hours than any other subject—and yet American colleges and universities have to spend nearly a million dollars a year to test the achievement in English of the 600,000 who apply for admission, find that about one fourth of them fail the tests, and spend over $10 million a year on "remedial" classes to teach high school English. In the colleges and universities themselves, the most nearly universal requirement is freshman composition—and yet many colleges and universities have to check up again on their students' use of English and send a considerable proportion of them to another "remedial" course before graduation. Even so, business and industry and the graduate schools all chorus that college graduates cannot write decent English. At the very top of the pyramid, the past two editors of *Publications of the Modern Language Association* have lamented that even professors of English cannot write effective English. One of them wrote that in his last four years as editor not one of the 280 articles published in *PMLA* "could have been or was accepted outright. Each has been returned at least once so that the author might profit from the critical commentary—most often made upon his lack of effective style. . . ."

This problem has been with us long enough for teachers of English, especially in college, to have developed means of dealing with it. But they push it aside and instead blame the schools of education, symbolized by John Dewey, or modern mass culture, symbolized by Madison Avenue. Or they blame the other English teacher: the graduate school blames the college, the college the high school, level by level down to the kindergarten, and the kindergarten teacher, at the bottom of the pecking order, has to go outside the school, blaming the parents or the community. But passing the buck, whether sideways or down, has grown tiresome. Too much evidence places responsibility for the state of English teaching, insofar as the teaching is a function of the training, on college and university departments of English. A last desperate ploy of some departments is to maintain that they have no more responsibility for the students' use of language than any other department; their business is teaching literature. My argument is twofold—the child has a right to a teacher who knows and the English department has the responsibility of seeing that the teacher knows.

The plain fact is that most English departments have been both blind and irresponsible. (This is writ large in *The National Interest and the Teaching of English:* only 15 percent of majors in training take a course in modern grammar; only 40 percent of majors and 25 percent of minors take a course in composition beyond freshman English.) As a consequence most teachers in the schools (and even in the colleges) have no training in language and composition. If the field of English is a trivium—language, composition, and literature—they have no training in two of the three areas, the two they are all certain to teach. As a further consequence, the textbooks and courses of study have to be tailored, not to exploit what there is for the well trained teacher to know about language, but to avoid anything the untrained teacher might find embarrassing. I don't think it is generally realized that textbooks for freshman English, for example, have to keep their sights on teachers who have had no training in linguistic or rhetorical analysis. I don't think it is generally realized either that the freshman English course is the place where most school teachers get their training in language and composition. What that training is Mr. Kitzhaber has shown us in *Themes, Theories, and Therapy.*

When the teacher-to-be is put into a course in language it may be of a sort that can only do harm. I offer one exhibit—an article, "Grammar and Writing," in *Educational Forum* (January 1959) by a college professor responsible for training teachers. He urges school teachers, on beginning the study of grammar, to make this offer to their students —to eliminate from the grammar to be studied any element that cannot "prove its value in the very most pragmatic sense." What it means for a grammatical element to prove its value in the very most pragmatic sense is shown by the two questions to be asked: "What grammatical blunder may a student make if he lacks knowledge of this element?" and "Just what grammatical knowledge is needed to avoid this gross blunder?" For a specific example, he puts the first question this way: "How for lack of knowledge of the *adjective* may one blunder?" I quote the answer, which is as incredible as the question:

> The possibilities are not numerous: one can get the wrong degree ("It is the best of two"), and one can use an adjective where he should the adverb ("This car runs real good"). I would not set children to underlining adjectives

> on a workbook page unless they understood that these are the immediate demonstrable reasons for their learning to identify adjectives.

This surely is the last and lowest ebb—pragmatism in the service of negation taught by underlining in a workbook. If this is what language study means, it would be better to drop it from the curriculum altogether. But a good way to test such a proposal is to apply it to some other subject. How does it work out applied to the study of literature? When you are about to embark on the study of *Hamlet*, make this offer to your students: you may skip any element that cannot prove its value to you in the very most pragmatic sense. Ask these two questions: What misconduct, what naughtiness, may you fall into if you lack knowledge of this speech or scene or character, or just what speeches, scenes, and characters must you know in order to avoid the sins of fratricide or matricide? Do not set children to underlining passages unless they understand that these are the immediate demonstrable reasons for studying *Hamlet*.

In the entire article I sensed no intimation that there is another, a positive, side to the coin; no intimation that knowledge of the adjective could help in using it or enhancing delight in someone else's effective use of it—

> The nights were still cool and they had a fire against it—a small fire, neat, niggard almost, a shrewd fire. . . . —Faulkner
>
> The air was cool and gray and here and there along the street, shapeless and watery sunlight strayed and vanished.—Jas. Agee
>
> Twigs of bushes leaned over the walls: the little hard green winterbuds of lilacs, on grey stems, sheathed and fat.—Conrad Aiken;

no intimation that grammar might be taught as a system, the intricately ordered and structured system by which a language operates; no intimation that composition based on insight into the working of this system can be something more than patching up sentences that have gone wrong through failure to understand the system; no intimation that language—what it is that makes us human—is worth studying for its own sake in a way that makes it the foundation of a liberal education.

With training like this for English teachers the role of language will be narrow and negative and, moreover, what this man does not realize, the time thus snatched for literature will be wasted on the insensitive.

When we turn the coin to the other side, it may be we can see ways to make language the means of ushering the young into their linguistic heritage instead of, as it is so often today, what turns it sour in their mouths. What must teachers know to give language the place it should have in the school's tradition? Let us take first the elementary and then the secondary schools.

A good publicist could make the present training in language of elementary teachers a national scandal. The NCTE study *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* showed that more than half of the nation's elementary teachers had had fewer than six hours of English of any sort beyond freshman English and that 96 percent of them had had no course in language or composition beyond freshman English. Donald Tuttle says it can be safely asserted that in this country engineers have at least as good preparation in the English language and in composition as elementary teachers. Many engineering schools are gravely concerned about the linguistic shortcomings of their graduates, because inability to communicate cripples an engineer and debars him from promotion to the upper levels of management. I do not see in very many English departments any such concern about elementary teachers, though the teachers' lack of training in language may cripple generations of children and debar them from careers in this reading and writing world.

In the elementary grades the curriculum is English more than anything else, and as English it is primarily reading and writing. Every elementary teacher is an English teacher; one's first English teachers are his elementary teachers. They have the children for six years—for half of their lives up to the end of the elementary school, as long as both junior and senior high schools, longer than college, as long as college and two years of graduate school. And they have them at the most impressionable age, when they are most ready and able to learn about language, to learn attitudes as well as details, fresh as they are from the immense intellectual achievement of learning to use speech.

By the time he comes to school, every normal child has learned, pretty much on his own, the language or languages of his culture. At school he has only to learn how to write and read the language he has already learned. Learning to write and read is much simpler than learning to speak and attend to speech, but it is here, at school, that the child's problems with language begin. No doubt the causes that make so many fluent speakers slow readers and nonwriters are many and complex, but certainly the first precaution in any attempt to forestall them must be to give the teachers such knowledge as is available about the nature of language and language learning. The departments of education have not scanted the psychological or even the physiological aspects of the problem, but the departments of English have not shown an equal concern with what should be their aspect of the problem. It is much easier to leave the whole job to the "educationists" and complain about the results.

Yet I believe that we are on the verge of new developmnts that will either bring English departments into the training of elementary teachers or definitely exclude them. The elementary teacher will have to have an expert's knowledge of language, altogether different from what she had last in the handbooks of freshman English.

The controlled-vocabulary approach to reading is now under attack. The Thorndike word counts belong to another generation and probably do not reflect the size or range of the vocabularies of children now in school. The idea of frequency lists, whether old or new, as sources of the vocabulary for readers is also under attack. Robert A. Hall, Jr., a linguist, and others, have argued that the vocabulary items should be chosen as far as possible on the basis of regularity in spelling, beginning in the first grade with words that are spelled regularly and postponing for a while those that are regularly irregular and to the last the irregularly irregular that are the staples of the spelling bee. Such a procedure would call for careful analysis of the English vocabulary from the standpoint of its representation by the English graphic system, to discover especially the regularities of the irregulars. When such an analysis is made in a scholarly way, as by Priscilla Tyler in "Spelling Design and Sound" *(Hexagon,* Vol. I, No. 1, Summer 1962) and by C. C. Fries in *Linguistics and Reading* (1962, 1963), it reveals the inaccuracies and inadequacies of the currently available phonics methods of teaching words. Incidentally, a test of the ability of teacher trainees and experienced teachers using phonics methods has shown that many of them, with present training, cannot even recognize the phonemes of English in words represented in print. (See Margaret R. Shannon, "Testing of Sounds and Spelling," *Hexagon,* Summer 1962.)

But there is an even more radical attack on present methods. One hint of it is the suspicion that the "Spot, look, Spot" type of reader does not reflect the range of sentence patterns actually used by children. Ruth Strickland has published an elaborate study and supervised a series of doctoral dissertations comparing the patterns of the readers and the patterns of recorded speech of the children who would be using them. Walter Loban has also been studying the development of the child's sentence patterns.

Finally, and most radical, Carl A. LeFevre attributes the widespread failure of present methods of teaching reading to the way they enforce word by word reading. The student reads word by word, as if the meaning were in the vocabulary alone. But the meaning is not in the separate words; it is in the words as members of form classes and in the structures or patterns they enter into. LeFevre's book *Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading* (1964) and Fries's *Linguistics and Reading* embody the fullest application to date of the widest range of linguistic knowledge.

I hope the drift of my argument is clear. The new approaches that promise to improve the teaching of reading, the single most important job of the elementary teacher, are all applications of linguistic scholarship. The school tradition, with its misconceptions about language and its fixation on social acceptability, has nothing to contribute but confusion. The scholarly adventurers who are showing the way must be backed up by responsible English departments. The child does have a right to a teacher who knows.

The prospective elementary teacher needs at least two solid courses in language. One should be a course in the structure of modern English, with time not only for syntax but for phonetics and phonemics, including intonation, a course rigorous enough to make it possible for the teacher to employ with skill and confidence the procedures suggested by such books as LeFevre's and Fries's. The other should be historical, directed less to the "decay" of the inflections of Old and Middle English than to the development of Modern English, concentrating less on details than on general principles and the development of an attitude toward language, a philosophy of language. It should make it possible for the teacher to deal sensibly with the problem of usage or correctness; the teacher who does not have a thorough understanding of the principle of usage is certain to do more harm than good. A historical course also touches on such relevant topics as changes in the forms of words (pronunciation, spelling, morphology), changes in the meaning of words (semantics), the recording of words (lexicography), and the social and regional variants of the language, a good sampling of which variants the teacher is likely to have in any given class in many American communities. It should not stop short of a survey of American regional dialects.

The elementary teacher should also have a course in composition beyond freshman English. It should not, though, be just any additional course in composition. It should be based on and reinforce the two language courses. It should include descriptive-narrative writing as well as expository writing. It should help the prospective teacher not only to write well but also to know what she is doing and why. Others may write well, playing it by ear, without knowing why; but the teacher must not only know whether a piece of writing is good or bad but be able to say in detail, word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, and for the whole just where and why. In short, the teacher must be not only a writer but a critic of writing—even the elementary teacher.

If one could add a fourth course it would be one in semantics. Hopefully, the elementary teacher's general education would include some work in speech and journalism. Hopefully, her degree would be an A.B., so that it would include a foreign language. Hopefully, she would be in a five-year program and her major would be English and her English major would include a course in literary analysis to facilitate the close reading of poetry and prose.

The secondary student, too, deserves a teacher who knows. The courses I have described would give him a teacher who does know. But besides knowing, the teacher is likely to have contracted an appetite for learning, because his training would have given him the sense, quite alien to the school tradition, that linguistics like any other field of scholarship is cumulative and progressive and that the teacher must continue a scholar.

But the secondary curriculum must be reorganized to exploit the teacher's knowledge. I want to make three points about the role of language in the junior and senior high school curriculum. The first will concern mainly the teaching of grammar, the second mainly composition and literature, the third mainly usage.

One of the deadliest features of the traditional teaching of grammar has been the repetitiousness. Year after year, the lesson in grammar, in junior high or earlier, to the last, in freshman English in college, it is the same thing, as if on a broken phonograph record: a noun is the name of a person, place, or thing; a sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought. I might be quoting any of a score of college handbooks or workbooks. We must make the teaching of grammar and of the composition based on it sequential and cumulative. It seems to me that we are now in a position to move from the circular treadmill to the spiral curriculum that Jerome S. Bruner has been explaining. The spiral curriculum requires that from the first (even if the first is the first grade) the subject must be taught in an intellectually honest way—no synthetic pablum for the kiddies; and it must be taught in such a way as to reveal the fundamental structure of the subject—not spectacular bits that might appeal to the immature or frivolous, not isolated details to be memorized for the examination. Then, when the subject is returned to at the next level, the teacher does not have to start (as we all say we have to) by undoing what was done by the last teacher; he can add to a soundly based structure.

The spiral curriculum obviously must be based on the best available scholarship and all the teachers must share it. Descriptive linguistics has developed far enough for us to begin developing a sequential and cumulative program in grammar. If the study of grammar begins in junior high school, begins in the seventh grade and continues in the eighth and ninth, as it should, the junior high school could lay a good foundation for the senior high school if it did not go much beyond the basic sentence patterns of structural grammar, the kernel sentences of transformation grammar. Paul Roberts has done so much to order the topics of modern grammar in a teachable sequence that I base the following list on his *English Sentences.* These would be the principal topics; they would not be treated exhaustively, of course.

1. The four form classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) and some of the items in some of the function groups.
2. The basic sentence patterns—by the end of junior high all of the ten that Roberts distinguishes.
3. Simple expansions of the predicate—the commonest verbal auxiliaries.
4. Passive and *there* transformations.
5. Modification—noun, verb, adjective, and adverb clusters.
6. Immediate constituents of noun and verb clusters.
7. Compounding within the patterns.
8. Subject-predicate agreement.
9. Fragments and run-on sentences.

In the senior high school all these topics would recur, not merely for review, but to have further details incorporated. In the following list of topics for senior high school, some have already been touched on; others are new, and they complete, as far as can be done in high school, the fundamental structure of the subject.

10. The verb phrase—two part verbs *(run up* a bill / *run* a bill *up)*

and the array of English verbal auxiliaries.

11. Noun substitutes—Sumner Ives says there are thirteen of them all told.
12. Clauses—the full range, in nominal, adjectival, and adverbial functions.
13. Verbals—with and without subjects, the full range, in nominal, adjectival, and adverbial functions.
14. Intonation.
15. Sentence modifiers—as defined by Paul Roberts. These structures, often neglected; sometimes almost overlooked, sometimes even misinterpreted, seem to me to be the most important sentence elements for the teaching of composition.

It will take some years to work out a series of textbooks for junior and senior high schools that will display our grammar sequentially and cumulatively, but I am confident that it can be done and that when it is done both teachers and students will find the study of this aspect of language exhilarating and enlightening.

The second point I want to make is equally important and it will be even more difficult to put into practice. We must learn to integrate the teaching of language, composition, and literature. It is only lately that we have cleared away enough of the underbrush and strangling parasitic growths to see that English—the real thing—can be reduced to three areas or disciplines. The effect of this discovery can be seen in the CEEB Summer Institutes. Each institute offered three courses; the courses were separate, planned independently and taught independently. The students took part in all three; their teachers did not. But one aim of the planners of the institutes was to find ways to integrate the three areas; this was one of the functions of the workshops that accompanied the three courses. But the evaluators of the institutes saw so little evidence of integration—in the workshops themselves or in the classes of the participants next year—that in their report John Gerber declared that integration did not seem feasible. He suggested, instead, that instructors in such institutes should point out interrelationships and that some of the assignments in composition should be based on materials of the other two areas.

But I believe that we can do better than this, using language as the base. Let me put it this way. Language is a code; the process of writing or speaking is encoding the message; the message, the product of this encoding, is the spoken utterance or the written piece, everything from the simplest to the most complex; hearing and reading are the process of decoding. In utilitarian writing we are interested primarily in the message; the code should be transparent. In fine writing—in literature, that is—we exploit the physical qualities of the code itself, the physical properties of language, to suggest more than can be uttered otherwise. In all these processes and states the constant element is the code, language—the words and the constructions they enter into. The way to start, at least, integrating the three areas is to remedy our neglect of the code. We English teachers, with no training in the code, find it easier to attend to anything other than the code—the encoder, the message, the decoder. We make writing, the encoding, a process of inspiration, and in teaching writing we aspire to inspire. We fall in with our students' easy faith that it is murder to dissect, though the analogy is patently faulty. When we attend to the encoded, sometimes we attend only to the message of the message; when we attend to the code, even when we profess to read closely and explicate the text, we have to be careful not to bump our noses on the language; we have to stay at one remove and deal with imagery, symbols, tension, irony. As Donald Lloyd once said, our act is like that of a dancer with his feet six inches off the earth.

In all the other arts, so far as I have observed the training, the beginner does not for his first assignment produce a painting, a statue, a sonata, the plans for a church. He studies and experiments with the properties of the medium; he proceeds step by step through the elements of the art as these have been established by the teaching tradition of the art. We in English have a fairly useful analysis of the larger elements of writing, but we are brought to a stand by the basic unit—the sentence. Grammar and composition and literature meet in the sentence. Thorough training in the grammar and rhetoric of the sentence would put the teaching of both writing and reading, both composition and literature, on a more solid foundation than the sandy ones they now tremble on. We have classes full of students who want to do "something creative" who cannot write a sentence. We try to teach the subtleties of older and modern literature—imagery, symbol, metaphor, irony—to students who can't make out the structure of fairly simple literal sentences. We try to teach the sound qualities of poetry and prose to students who cannot distinguish between letters and phonemes and have no language to discuss either.

If I have done anything to justify my being here, it is that I have tried to build on the foundation of modern grammar a modern rhetoric of the sentence that brings together all three parts of the trivium.

My last point about the role of language in the curriculum is again a criticism of the school tradition and its heritage. I am concerned here with its authoritarianism. Albert C. Baugh in his *History of the English Language* called the chapter covering the period when the school tradition took form "The Age of Authority." It corresponds to the neoclassic period in English Literature (1660-1800). We sometimes call this period the Enlightenment, the period when, according to Arthur D. Lovejoy, the effort of the reformer was to standardize men, to make them uniform, as children of one mother. Baugh's chapter is one that every English teacher should read; it will tell him something about the drummer he may have been listening to, whose cadence is that of Bach and Haydn and the minuet, or that of Dryden, Pope, and Johnson and the heroic couplet.

It is what men like Dryden and Swift and Johnson thought about language that many English teachers still hold to. Johnson thought, for example, that any language that did not have a writing system was as evanescent as breath. He thought that words which he did not enter into his dictionary would vanish too like breath. He thought that the vernaculars, such as English, were poor things and that they must be reconstructed on the basis of some other language, such as Latin. The age thought that the language, so reconstructed, must then be reduced to rule, so that it could be taught like Latin, and that all divided usages must be settled, so that English essays could be corrected like Latin essays; it thought that the language, so reconstructed and so reduced to rule, must be fixed, made to stay put as it imagined Latin had stayed put.

Thus teacher and student alike were confronted, and they still are, with a linguistic system that was artificial, closed, and static. The teacher had no alternative but to teach it and the student to learn it, verbatim. It is this that makes it authoritarian; it makes no provision for individual judgment or choice. The English curriculum is a school for conformity. It puts them in boxes and they all come out the same.

Such rule-by-rote learning is not education—least of all humane or liberal education. It is conditioning. The method of liberal education is to develop the capacity for rational choice. Choice is not rational unless it is guided by a sense of fact. The teacher that the child deserves will work to develop the habit of observing language in whatever he hears or reads, and will teach him to extend his observation, to confirm or correct it, by consulting dictionaries and other records of usage. The cries of outrage over *Webster's Third* were largely the cries, someone has said, of children being weaned. They saw themselves deprived of ready-made judgments, and they wanted them—whether or not the editors could make sound ones. The teacher should be, and the student should become, his own Webster, his own or her own Bergen or Cornelia Evans. Most teachers develop a baleful eye for the conventional "errors," but it is a rare teacher to whom it ever occurs that observation will throw light on problems of usage, or that the practice of professional writers might be worth more than the dictums of textbook writers, or that divided usage is something that we can live with.

The teacher that the child deserves would not only help him to observe language (which can be great fun), but would help him to develop judgment and taste in making choices. One of the sorriest effects of the rule-by-rote teaching is that it blunts the powers of discrimination. It develops what Hayakawa calls signal reactions. It seems never to occur to the rule-bound that discrimination is called for. He follows the crudest rule, and come hell or high water, come awkwardness or ambiguity, come wordiness or incongruity, he will not split an infinitive or end a clause with a preposition. When used without judgment, the cure is worse than the disease. Overcorrection is becoming a real problem. The annual report of the president of Harvard usually has an instance or two of someone trying to be correct and overshooting the mark. The boxes really are made of ticky tacky.

In closing, I want to deal with the imputation one sometimes hears that linguistics is just the latest of the will o' the wisps that English teachers are always chasing in the hope of finding a panacea—things like propaganda analysis, semantics, communication theory, and group dynamics. None of these has panned out; they are all relevant to our work, but they are not central. Linguistics, by which I mean the modern study of language, is central; it is the essence of our business. From its beginning in the eighteenth century to the present, such teaching of language and composition as we have had has been based on a radical misapprehension of what language is and how it works, how language is learned, and how and how far language practices can be modified. We have been in the position of those who have tried to control malaria by controlling the "bad air." It makes a difference when you start controlling the mosquitoes. Shaw, you remember, said that nobody knew whether Christianity would work. It had never been given a trial.